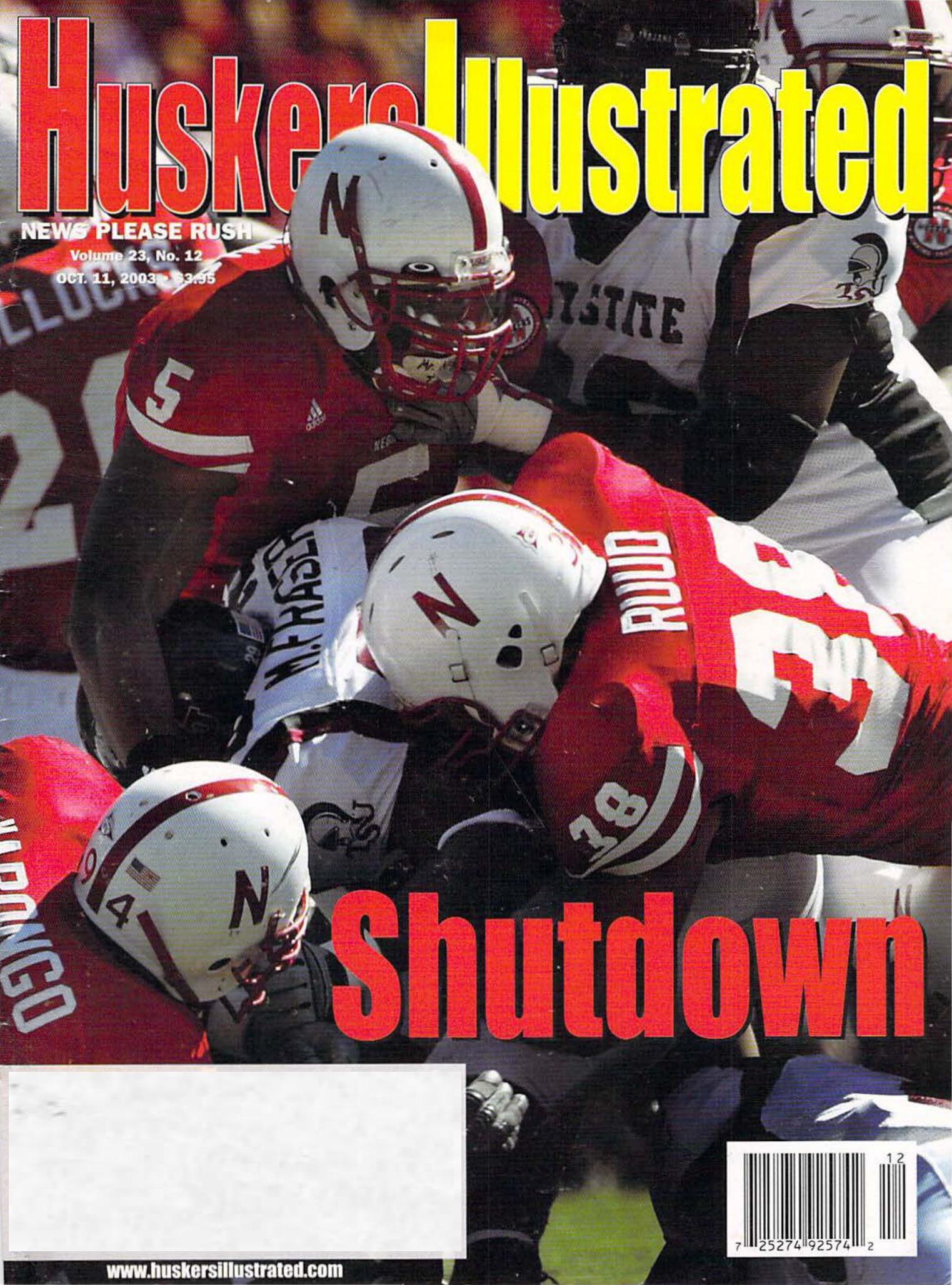
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FROM THE EDITOR

On To Mizzou

Huskers take care of business before returning to Big 12 slate

Brian HILL

IT HAS MANY of the signs of a trap.

Nebraska's game at Missouri has been moved to night. The Tigers have had an extra week to prepare for the Huskers. Nebraska will come in as a Top 10-rated favorite. And so on.

This is certainly the year for surprises, the latest example being lowly Baylor, which had lost 37 of its last 38 Big 12 Conference games, knocking off Colorado 42-30.

After a 5-0 start and a quick rise in the ratings, it's easy to not include the Huskers on the list of 2003 surprises. After last year's 7-7 season, many projections had the free fall continuing. That hasn't happened.

If Nebraska can get by Missouri, it has a great shot to take an 8-0 record to Texas Nov. 1. After the road trip to Columbia, the Huskers return home for back-to-back games with 2-3 Texas A&M and 2-3 Iowa State.

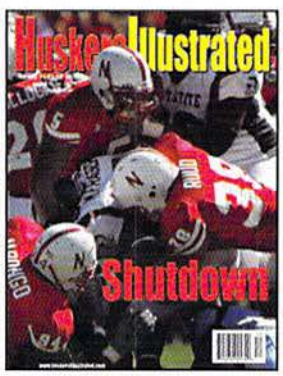
But we're getting ahead of ourselves, and that's one thing it doesn't appear this Nebraska team will do. With the conference season set to resume, it might have been easy to look past Troy State.

As usual, there was some moaning and groaning about a lackluster performance, but the bottom line was a 30-0 victory, the first shutout since a 59-0 blanking of Baylor on Oct. 21, 2000.

Granted, this was Troy State, not Texas or Kansas State, but the Trojans were coming off a victory over Marshall, which had knocked off K-State in Manhattan a week earlier.

"They took criticism last year, so this year they are playing with a vengeance," Troy State tailback DeWhitt Betterson said. "We killed ourselves, but they are really, really good. They played like the No. 1 defense in the nation today."

Yes, the Husker defense, which took a lot of the heat for the problems a year ago, entered the game No. 1 in total defense, allowing 235.8 yards per game. And they should maintain that lofty perch after limiting Troy State to 150 yards in total offense.



You can read much, much more about Nebraska's performance on the first Saturday of October in this edition of Huskers Illustrated. Contributing editor Mike Babcock takes a look at the "second-generation Huskers" in this week's feature story. Our player profile provides an interesting look at sophomore offensive tackle Richie Incognito.

Fittingly, this week's installment of "Where Are They Now" is a look back at place-kicker Dale Klein's record-breaking performance against Missouri in 1985. Klein booted seven field goals in Nebraska's 28-20 victory in Columbia that year.

To win this time around, the Huskers will have to contain Missouri's dual-threat quarterback Brad Smith, something they did pretty well last year in Lincoln. While the Nebraska defense has allowed just 38 points all season, Missouri's last two opponents — Middle Tennessee and Kansas — have put up 75.

It sounds like a good opportunity for the Nebraska offense. ■

ON THE COVER

Nebraska's Patrick Kabongo (left), Benard Thomas (5) and Barrett Ruud (38) swarm Troy State tailback Marrio Fraser. *Photo by Scott Bruhn.*

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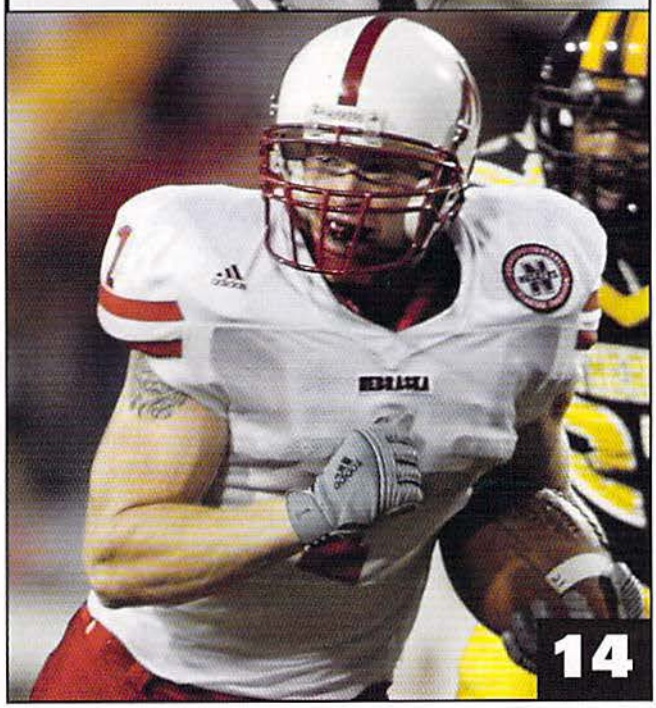

14 Second-Generation Huskers

Six current Cornhuskers, including I-back Josh Davis (above), have followed their fathers to Nebraska to play football. *By Mike Babcock*

Next Issue

The Missouri review/Texas A&M preview edition will be mailed Oct. 13. Check for updates at huskersillustrated.com.

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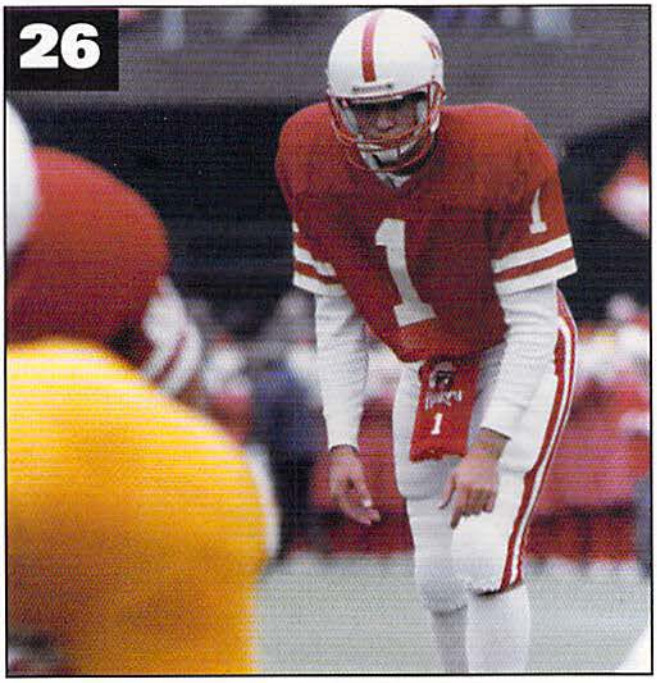


He Can Tackle

The extra strength and added weight have served Fabian Washington well. He can tell the difference when he makes a tackle. "It still hurts," he says. "But you can get up and just shake it off."

That has been important this season. The sophomore cornerback ranks among the team's leading tacklers, right up there with the linebackers. Through four games, he was third, behind Barrett Ruud and Demorrio Williams — and second behind Williams in unassisted tackles.

Washington is making a statement. "I want to show people I can be a tackler," he says. "A lot of people think I'm just a cover corner, that I won't tackle anybody. But I'm showing this year that I will come up and tackle."

Not that he wouldn't come up and tackle last season, but his speed — 4.47 seconds in the 40-yard dash — and ability to lock up receivers are what got him on the field as a true freshman.

"I don't think he was strong, coming in as a freshman," says secondary coach Marvin Sanders. "But he knew that was one of his weaknesses." And he did something about it.

Like his teammates, he worked hard in the weight room over the summer.

"That helps your confidence," Sanders says. "If you feel you're a stronger player, feel you can be more physical, that helps jamming receivers, taking on blocks.

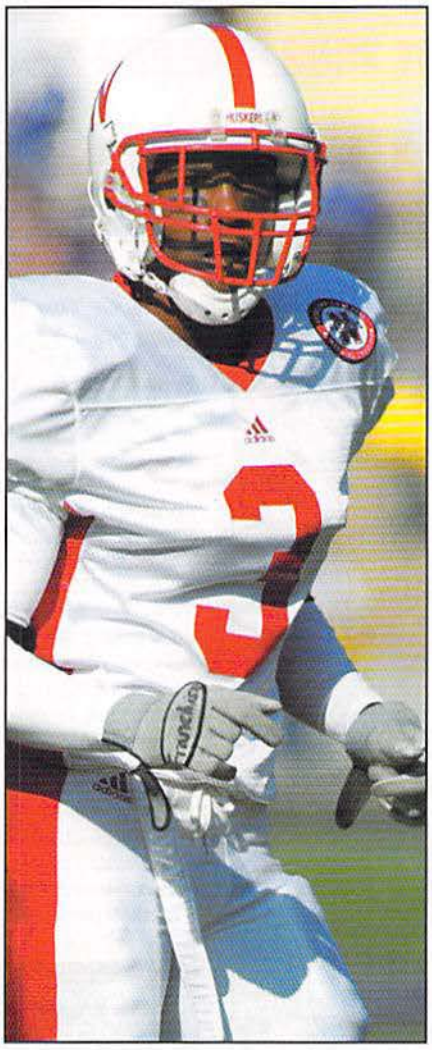
"It helps in every avenue when you feel more confident in your strength."

Washington was confident in his ability last season. He wouldn't have played otherwise.

"At cornerback, you have to believe you're just as good as the guy you're going up against, and Fabian thinks he can handle anybody they put out there on him," says Sanders. "He's proven so far that he can. I think his biggest asset is his confidence in himself, his belief in himself."

As he matures, Washington is learning the value of techniques and schemes. Like most young players, he relied on athletic ability a year ago, and that was sufficient to earn him a starting job.

He started 11 games and set Cornhusker freshman records for pass breakups (13) and interceptions (4). He also was credited with 49 tackles — and he's already more than halfway there.



Sophomore cornerback Fabian Washington had 27 tackles in Nebraska's first four games.

His efforts earned him a place on The Sporting News freshman All-America second team. But his success didn't blind him to the need for improvement. "It's always hard for a young man who experiences success early to be told, 'You can get better by doing it this way,' " Sanders says.

"It's hard because he saw success doing it his way."

Even so, Washington has been doing it Sanders' way, and has seen the benefits.

"He knows what he's talking about," says Washington. "He sees stuff on film that we just didn't see last year when we were preparing for games. I feel like if a person knows what they're talking about, I'm always listening. From the moment I met him, I thought he knew what he was talking about. He hasn't proved wrong yet. Everything he tells me in meetings seems to work in games."

What Sanders has told him is that ability alone won't get the job done. To illustrate, all Sanders has had to do is show him videotape of last season's games against Oklahoma State and Texas. Dealing with Rashaun Woods and Roy Williams requires more than speed and athleticism.

Washington played "strictly on athletic ability, and at times, against good players, that caught up with him," Sanders says. "So now, basically, we've got to try to get technique to coincide with that athletic ability, and that's what he has really improved on, being a better technical football player."

Woods caught 11 passes for 134 yards and a touchdown against Nebraska last season, a fact that drove Washington and the other defensive backs during the off-season.

"He didn't want those kind of things happening again," says Sanders.

And they didn't. Woods managed only five catches for 47 yards and a touchdown in the season-opener. Two weeks later, he caught seven touchdown passes against SMU.

Washington is more comfortable, although "I was comfortable last year," he says. But "last year, sometimes I'd come out and I was confident in my ability but I wasn't confident that I would carry out my ability on any given play. Now, I just think every time I'm out there, I can lock up anybody."

He also thinks he can tackle anybody. He's 10 pounds heavier, at 175, and still intends to gain more weight and add more muscle, without slowing down. "He's tough," Sanders says.

"He's not just a straight cover corner. He's also a guy that can come up and make plays. When you have that combination, it allows you to do some things. We do a lot of different things with him."

Washington never blitzed last season, for example. But he is now. "I like it," he says. ■

NO PANCAKE TOTALS

In recent seasons, "pancake" totals were regularly included among Nebraska's football statistics. Cornhusker blockers were credited with "pancakes," a term for knock-down blocks.

It was about the only way to measure an offensive lineman's play statistically. But offensive coordinator and line coach Barney Cotton has eliminated "pancake" from the vernacular.

Coach Frank Solich had no complaint about the change in emphasis. "People are hearing that guys had so many knockdowns, and we lose the game," he says. "Something's not matching up."

CONTROLLED AGGRESSION

Sophomore offensive tackle Richie Incognito, last season's pancake leader, hasn't lost his aggression but he has controlled it better than he did last season.

"I wasn't here last year, and I won't really comment too much about it," says Cotton. However, "I will say that Richie has been very professional in his approach to games this year.

"He has had numerous opportunities to have situations occur in games, and he's been able to walk away from every one of them. So he's doing what all our players are coached to do, try to stay away from situations that could arise in a personal foul."

During a weekly news conference, Cotton was asked if Incognito was the "key" to the Cornhuskers' offensive line play. "I don't know if any one guy is the key," he replied. "I will say that Richie is playing extremely hard, whistle to whistle, and he is an absolutely relentless offensive lineman.

"So he definitely is one of the keys. But I'll be reluctant to say that one guy is the key."

NOT BY THE NUMBERS

Nebraska's defense has been ranked at or near the top nationally in major defensive statistical categories, but "we haven't talked about that a whole heck of a lot," defensive coordinator Bo Pelini says. "We feel good about what we've accomplished up to this point. But that's about it."

Concern about statistics is a "trap," he says. "When you start talking about that and you start worrying about that, you can fall into the trap. We've talked about not doing that.

"Let other people talk about where we're ranked and statistics. We're not all about that. We're all about getting wins, do what you have to do in each particular game to get the win. If that means holding them to 30 and we get a win, then that's a successful night. And then we'll make our corrections."

The goal is to reach "an elite level," says Pelini. ■

QUICK HITS

What's Happening In Nebraska Athletics?

MATURE LEFTY

The discouragement showed, for about two days. That's understandable. But then Brian Duensing assured Nebraska baseball coach Mike Anderson that he would come back.

"He was almost consoling me," says Anderson. "We sat down, and Brian looked at me and said, 'Coach, I'm going to make it back. Don't worry about me. I'm going to help this team.' To have a kid say that, after an injury like that, I'll tell you what, he's a pretty mature young man."

Brian Duensing

The junior pitcher from Omaha suffered a partial ligament tear in his left elbow in the fourth game last season. He was the No. 2 starter, with a 3-0 record and 2.42 earned-run average.

His choice was difficult, to undergo surgery, popularly known as "Tommy John surgery," or to rest the elbow and hope it healed. Duensing opted for the latter, "a long process, from literally a long period of rest to a long and slow rehab process to get back to 100 percent," Anderson says.

The process continues during the Cornhuskers' fall practice. Duensing won't be tested to determine whether he's 100 percent recovered until after fall practice is finished, according to Anderson.

Nearly seven months have passed. "He's been incredible," says Anderson.

"The doctors, what they don't want to do is say, 'OK, you've done this, let's have surgery.' " But if he doesn't test at 100 percent then, "unfortunately, surgery is likely."

Anderson, buoyed by Duensing's determination, remains "optimistic" that he'll be able to pitch for the Cornhuskers at some point in the spring. "I can tell you this, it's a serious injury, and it's a tough injury for any pitcher," Anderson says. "So I'm optimistic with what Brian's doing but still cautious."

COMMITTED TO THE RUN

Almost weekly, Nebraska Coach Frank Solich reiterates Nebraska's commitment to the running game and its advantages, including controlling the ball. "That's, in my thinking, "the right thing to do," he says.

"If you look at Ohio State in winning the national championship a year ago, they didn't put the ball in the air an awful lot. They relied on their running game. You look at Coach (Tom) Osborne's national championship years, it was primarily the same way.

"It's still our thinking that if you're able to control the ball and if you're not turning the ball over and creating some turnovers, those things are all going to add up to be pluses for you."

ONE STEP AHEAD OF THE QUESTION

During the Monday news conference after the off-week before the Southern Mississippi game, Cotton was asked if the time had allowed the Cornhuskers to work on some things. "Well, we keep working on our passing game, if that's where this question is headed," he replied, eliciting laughter.

Later, he was asked if freshman quarterback Joe Dailey would play in the game.

"It's possible Joe could play," Cotton said. "I've got that coach-speak down, guys. I can do that."

GOOD WORKS

Junior place-kicker Sandro DeAngelis has been named to the 2003 American Football Coaches Association Good Works Team. The AFCA sponsors two teams, one for Division I-A programs and one representing Division I-AA, Division II, Division III and NAIA programs.

Each team includes 11 student-athletes, nominated by college sports information departments. The nominees must be involved in working with charitable organizations, service groups or other community service activities. Among other things, DeAngelis is a spokesperson from the Lancaster County Sheriff's Office D.A.R.E. program and a volunteer speaker at the I've Got Heart Program.

DeAngelis, who is from Niagara Falls, Ontario, Canada, is Nebraska's ninth representative on the Good Works Team, which was established in 1992 by the College Football Association. No other program has had as many honorees, on either team.

REMEMBERING JAKE

Senior center Josh Sewell was awarded the first Jake Young Memorial Scholarship in a ceremony prior to the Utah State game. Young, a two-time All-American and Academic All-American center at Nebraska from 1986 to 1989, was killed in a terrorist bombing in Bali last October.

The scholarship, which will be presented annually, was made possible by donations from friends and family. Sewell's parents accepted the award on his behalf, from Young's parents.

Donations for the scholarship fund can be made through the University of Nebraska Foundation. ■

It Didn't Take Long

Pelini focused on the job at hand, not where his next career move will take him

Mike BABCOCK

NEBRASKA FANS still holding a grudge over the 37-27 loss to Texas in the 1996 Big 12 championship game had little time to delight in Arizona's recent firing of Coach John Mackovic.

Before Mackovic could get out of Tucson, only days after receiving the dreaded vote of confidence from his superiors, there was speculation about who would succeed him.

First-year defensive coordinator Mike Hankwitz was named interim coach, and indicated he would like to be considered a candidate to replace his former boss. But others whose names surfaced included out-of-work coaches Mike Price and Rick Neuheisel, as well as Oklahoma Coach Bob Stoops and Nebraska defensive coordinator Bo Pelini. Yes, right there on SI.com, Pelini. Perish the thought.

The Internet report required comment, of course.

"Somebody mentioned that to me yesterday," Pelini said during Nebraska's weekly news conference on the Tuesday before the Troy State game. "I don't really pay attention to that stuff."

His response was followed by the same question, phrased in a slightly different manner. "I don't really think about it, one way or the other," he said. "It's not my concern right now."

If you've been around Pelini at all, you know that's the case. He is focused on the job at hand, coordinating the Cornhusker defense, not on where his next career move will take him.

Bo Pelini says Nebraska is "a special place."

But his single-mindedness, and his restoring of a bite to the Blackshirts, is almost certain to take him elsewhere in the not-too-distant future. He is young, 35-years-old, with a family. And what he has shown he can do as a teacher of defense will command big money as a head coach at some point.

The week after the Penn State game, in the Sept. 22 issue, Sports Illustrated's Kelley King wrote that Pelini "is proving to be the biggest score from Frank Solich's overhaul last winter."

Even though this is his first job as a defensive coordinator, the Cornhuskers were ranked No. 1 nationally in total defense going into the Troy State game, a reflection of his system.

By all accounts, he is a players' coach, who stresses effort and intensity, qualities that seemed to be missing at times last season. "You've got to be emotional to play defense," he said.

You've also got to be willing to subvert your own interests for the good of the team. Successful defense is "not one or two guys," he added, noting that those outside the program are "always going to put one or two guys in the spotlight and say they're the reason. But it's a team game.

"Playing good defense is about playing team defense. That's a fact. So when we talk about it, we talk about everybody handling their responsibility. If there are 10 guys handling their responsibility, they're enabling that one guy, those couple of guys, that make the big plays to get their job done."

The same is true of a coaching staff. Pelini has been credited for the success of a resurgent defense. But it has depended on all of the defensive assistants, those returning and those who are new.

Still, he has earned the attention, as surely as he dismisses it.

"I don't feel like I've achieved anything yet," he said. "We're just in the process of getting our defense established. We have a long way to go. But things are moving in the right direction."

His use of the plural pronouns "we" and "our" aren't by chance. He has stressed from day one that the defense isn't his, that it's a group effort, extending to the entire coaching staff.

Rebuilding the defense is no small task, under pressure comparable to that at any program in the country. "They expect a lot of you, real fast," Pelini said.

"It's just the nature of the program. It's a storied place. There's a lot of tradition. Coach Solich obviously filled me in on what I'd be walking into before I took the job." The expectations are high, "but they give you a tremendous amount of support, too. It's a special place."

Solich deserves credit for what has occurred with the defense, too. And regardless of the implications, he is publicly supportive of the career aspirations of Pelini and the other assistants, on both sides of the ball. "It's obvious when there is success, coaches from those programs are looked at, and there are coaches, many of them, that move on. So that's the name of the game," said Solich.

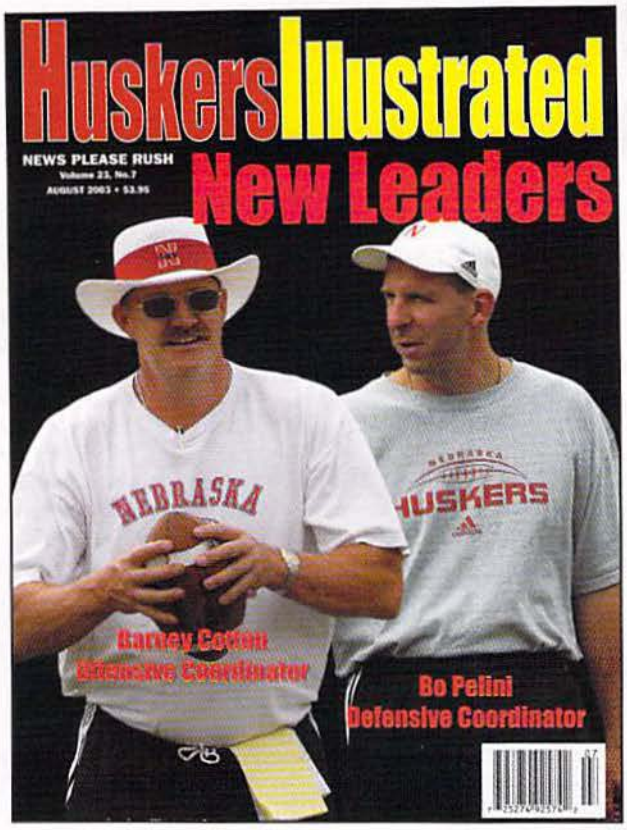
"I'm all for our coaches being able to be successful in this profession and to reach whatever goals they may have. I think that's great. That's good for our coaches. That's good for our program."

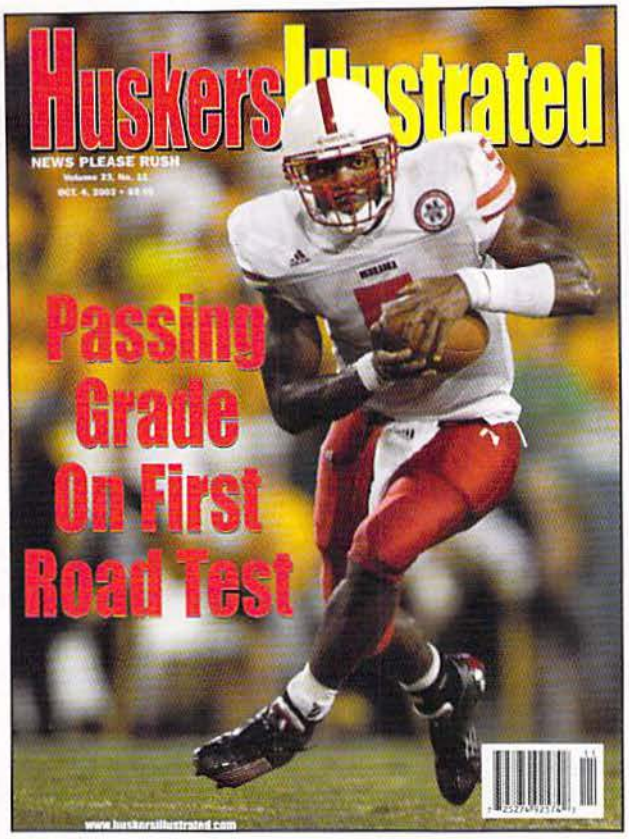
As for the Arizona speculation, "no one has called me," he said.

Fortunately for Nebraska, that would be way too soon for Pelini to leave. ■

***Mike Babcock** is a former sports columnist for the Lincoln Journal Star. He has covered Nebraska football for more than 20 years. Mike can be reached at MBABCOCK1@neb.rr.com or P.O. Box 6782, Lincoln, NE 68506.*

All Huskers . . .





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. . . All The Time

Feels So Right

Some differences can be seen, others aren't nearly as obvious

Curt McKEEVER

A COUPLE OF YEARS AGO in Austin, Texas, a group I know checking out the entertainment scene on famed Sixth Street got this piece of advice from a local.

"Oh, it's going on," the gent responded, as if he'd just been asked a silly question. "This is Austin town. It's going down like a rat-a-tat-tat."

Something big appears to be brewing now at Nebraska, too. And in a weird sort of way, it reminds me of the previously mentioned scene in Austin. It's hard to understand.

The Huskers, much maligned after last year's 7-7 campaign, entered October with a 4-0 record. And though they'd looked pretty only on defense, the prospects for an equally successful month appeared promising.

It's almost like this team is the Ohio State of 2003, which was nowhere near drop-dead gorgeous early in the season, and yet stunning as it made its way down the pageant runway with the national crown.

In its only road game, Nebraska managed just 265 yards, yet beat Southern Mississippi in convincing fashion 38-14. Hmmm?

Nebraska has a rushing attack that can be overpowering. But against a team that ranked 93rd in the country at stopping the run, the Huskers had to rely on the arm of Jammal Lord.

"I take the win and move on," Lord said. "It's a win. I don't care about highlights."

Apparently, that's exactly how the rest of the Huskers feel, too. And perhaps it's that kind of good chemistry that's making the difference in masking the deficiencies.

Jammal Lord says the Huskers don't care about highlights.

"Sometimes it's just there, and you can feel it," said Coach Frank Solich, who's in the midst of bouncing his program back from shame.

Solich said he "feels it" with this bunch. And it's no surprise, because he felt it before the season began.

Hard to figure.

Solich may have hired the best coaches in the business when he replaced six assistants. But you still could've looked at the schedule and easily concluded Big Red would exit September no better than 3-1, perhaps even 2-2.

By now, it's safe to say the Huskers have meshed with their new coaches. That they're playing with a greater purpose than last season. And that they won't back down in the heat of the battle.

Despite its struggle for yardage at Southern Miss, Nebraska put 38 points on the board. In 13 seasons under Jeff Bower, the Golden Eagles had allowed only two other teams to come into Hattiesburg, Miss., and do that much damage.

Of course, Nebraska's cause was helped by a defense that came up with five turnovers to bring its four-game total to 15.

Would you believe that a year ago, NU didn't come up with its 12th turnover until the ninth game?

Maybe first-year defensive coordinator Bo Pelini really is a genius?

He's helped linebacker Barrett Ruud transform from a wide-eyed and confused sophomore to an All-America candidate. Free safety Josh Bullocks was leading the nation in interceptions. And weakside linebacker Demorrio Williams was No. 1 in headaches caused.

Nebraska also has a priceless field-position specialist in punter Kyle Larson, and a icy-cool field goal kicker in David Dyches.

Now, before we get carried away with praise for this edition, remember, it's a long season. Even the best in the Big 12 find it hard to navigate a perfect route through the league.

But let's give credit where it's due. After all, how many of us predicted this kind of start for the Huskers?

"We had a good team last year; we just didn't put it together," senior nose tackle Ryon Bingham said. "Mentally, I think we're a lot more prepared and focused. We're playing together and playing harder."

Former defensive coordinator Charlie McBride has taken notice.

"In the second half against Oklahoma State, the chemistry on defense started to show," McBride said, referring to the Aug. 30 opener, a game in which the Huskers yielded nothing after the Cowboys' first drive. "The kids were jumping around. There was confidence in what they were doing. Technique-wise, they're playing better."

The straight-shooting Pelini exudes confidence, and it's catching on with his unit.

Beyond that, the Blackshirts are getting leadership that was lacking in 2002. Players like Ruud and Williams and cornerback Fabian Washington are taking ownership in the team's fate.

"It has to come from the kids," McBride said. "They have to decide what they want to do."

Nebraska's defense is doing a better job of disguising coverages. The Huskers are using more zone coverages and more zone blitzes. They're putting Williams in position to make plays.

Those things you can readily see. The improved chemistry isn't nearly as obvious. But it's there.

It's the Huskers' sideline going bonkers after fourth-string I-back Robin Miller bolts for a fourth-quarter touchdown against Southern Miss.

It's backup quarterback Joe Dailey saying after the game that fans ought to be chanting "Lord" instead of his name.

It's Bullocks telling people 2002 is in the past: "We've got new coaches now, and they are more players' coaches."

What's it all mean? Let's leave it at this: Entering October, things were definitely going down in Husker town. ■

***Curt McKeever** is a sportswriter, covering the University of Nebraska for the Lincoln Journal Star. In addition to reporting on football he is the primary beat writer for the men's basketball and baseball teams.*

Taking Care Of Business

Solich, coaching staff stressing workman-like approach in 2003

Terry DOUGLASS

FOLLOWING A 1993 SEASON in which Nebraska just missed winning a national championship, the Cornhuskers adopted the slogan "Unfinished Business" for the 1994 campaign. The result was a national title.

Now, nearly a decade later, Nebraska's approach following a 7-7 season might best be described as "All Business." In what many people felt was a crossroads season for the Cornhuskers, the entire program — coaches, players and all other staff — has taken on a workman-like approach.

The results have been impressive. Starting the season ranked outside of the top 25 for the first time since 1969, Nebraska has used a straightforward, no-nonsense style to climb back into the top 10 in the ESPN/USA Today coaches' poll.

With some college football analysts predicting doom and gloom and others — like yours truly — proclaiming that Nebraska should be ecstatic with an 8-4 regular season, the Huskers have been a bit of a surprise to outsiders.

The talk among the players and coaches about being all business and taking care of business, etc., is no accident. It's a subject that has been stressed by Coach Frank Solich and his retooled coaching staff since the six new assistants were hired.

Nebraska's players are now required to wear suits to games as part of their all-business approach. So far, it seems everyone at Big Red Inc., has been impressed with the results.

"And it's got to continue that way," Solich said. "We've played well enough to win . . . but every game will be a contest, and if we're going to have the kind of year we want to have, we're going to have to work at getting better. That's been their attitude."

Coach Frank Solich liked what he saw on the first road trip.

While many of the faces are the same, the attitude has been completely transformed since last season's debacle.

"It's a different team, a different attitude, and we have more confidence," safety Josh Bullocks said. "We've got new coaches now, and they are more of players' coaches, and all the players on the team really seem to like the coaches."

While pondering the moves Solich felt he was forced to make with his coaching staff, the sixth-year head coach probably couldn't have imagined that things would begin so smoothly. Bringing in new coordinators on both sides of the football was indeed a risky proposition, but the Huskers appear to have bought in to the new systems of Barney Cotton and Bo Pelini 100 percent.

"I think it has just been a good mesh between the coaches and players," Solich said. "These guys never stopped believing in themselves and feel very good about the system and the schemes we're running and how they're being taught."

The way Nebraska has bounced back after enduring its worst season since 1961 last year is also a testament to team chemistry, Solich said.

"I really felt all along that the team had great chemistry," Solich said. "I've said that all along and sometimes, it's tough to make people understand that sometimes, it's just there. You can see it and everybody feels it, and I think that's the way it is with this team."

The combination of early success and the belief in the coaching staff has restored a crucial element that Nebraska appeared to be lacking last season: confidence.

"We're high. We've got a lot of confidence," defensive end Benard Thomas said. "We've got a strong defense, a nice little offense, and as the year goes on, we'll put this together and go ahead and knock things out and get the job done."

Perhaps Nebraska's best example of its businesslike approach was its first road trip of the season to Southern Mississippi. After last year's dreary 1-5 record away from home, Solich said he was proud of the way his team waded through distractions, kept its focus and produced a 38-14 win over the Golden Eagles.

"They responded the way we wanted them to respond," Solich said. "I think they were very focused coming into that football game. They prepared to play well, and they knew what kind of environment they were coming into, they knew what they were going to have to do to get it done, and I think they stepped up and did that.

"They deserve an awful lot of credit for it. Now, they've got to step up and do it a lot more times."

Even with the strong start, the Huskers appear to be a group that is intent on seeing this turnaround through. Despite enduring plenty of criticism in 2002, Nebraska's players aren't running to every TV camera and microphone they can find to proclaim that Nebraska is back.

"Honestly, it feels real good to get victories and all, but our main thing is to come out and play hard every week," linebacker Demorrio Williams said. "We're not trying to send messages to anybody. We're just trying to let people know we're going to play hard every play."

Bullocks agreed.

"The team is not satisfied," Bullocks said. "We won't be satisfied until the end of the season."

Certainly, Nebraska doesn't want to jump the gun in proclaiming its own success because it's way too early. After all, the Huskers were 3-5 in Big 12 Conference play last year and still have nearly a full slate of difficult league games remaining, including this weekend's matchup against a dangerous Missouri team playing on its home field.

Truthfully, Williams believes the Huskers still have a lot of business to take care to regain the program's lost mystique. That can only be accomplished if Nebraska stays on task.

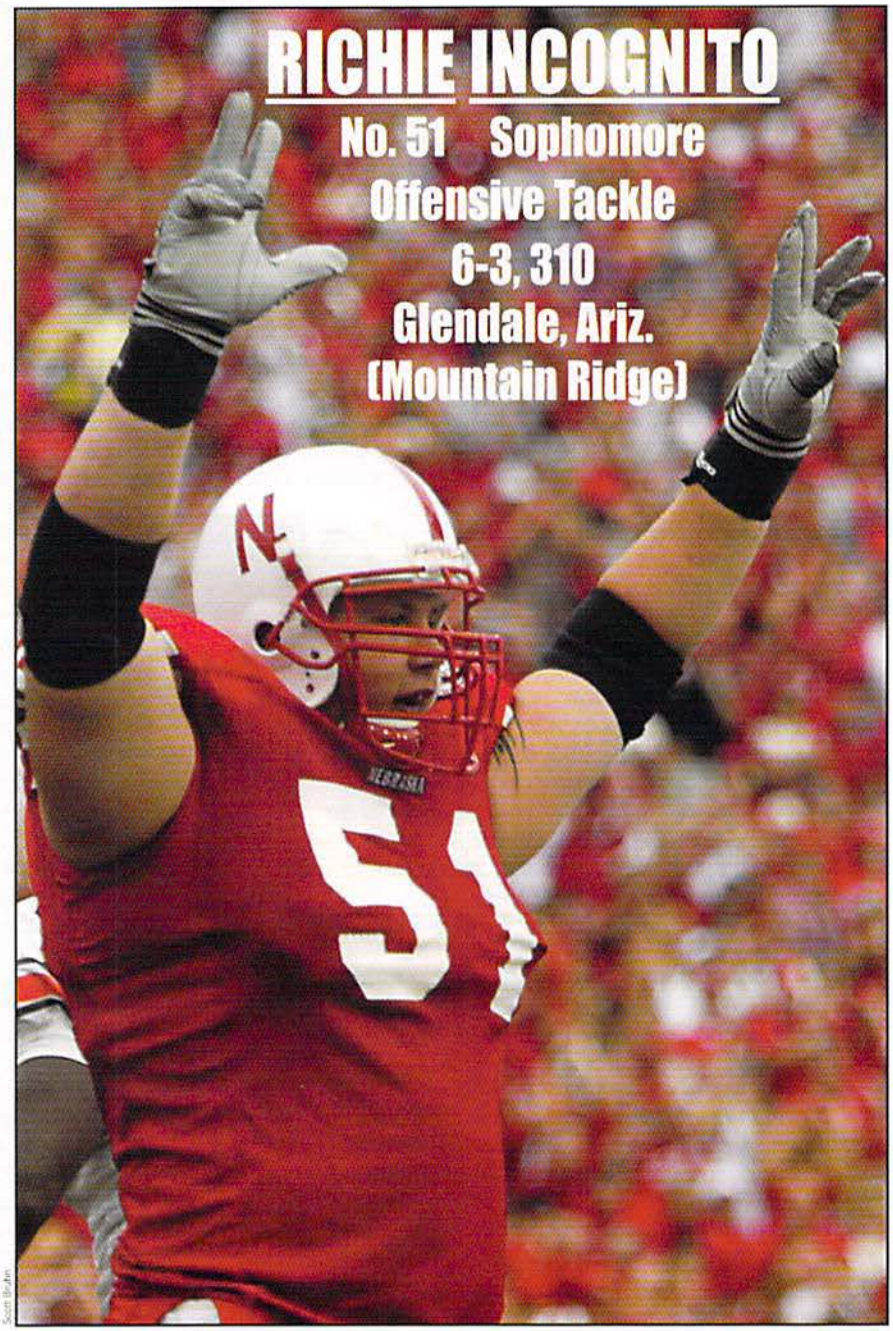
"We've still got a lot more stuff to prove, so right now, I feel like we've got to keep playing hard," Williams said. "We can't relax right now for anything." ■

Terry Douglass *is the sports editor of the Grand Island Independent. He can be reached at tdbbdouglass@earthlink.net.*

PLAYER PROFILE

'Power Hitter'

Tackle Incognito once considered concentrating on baseball



The childish prank might have gone unpunished if Richie Incognito's arm had been as strong as Chris Simms' arm. But the two were caught and brought to parental justice.

Incognito's dad was doing tile and marble work on Phil Simms' house, and Richie had accompanied him. While his dad worked, he and Chris, who was a couple of years older, had joined another boy from the neighborhood on a mission of mischief, throwing tomatoes at a nearby house.

However, "we were chickens," Incognito says. "We were so far away."

As it turned out, they were too far away for his throws to reach even the vicinity of the house. Chris "was hitting the house," says Incognito. "But I had to move closer."

And moving closer was the trio's undoing. "My dad was pretty upset," Incognito says.

Even so, getting in trouble with Phil Simms' son was something of a youthful badge of honor. Until he was 12-years-old, Incognito lived in New Jersey, just north of the George Washington Bridge, and he was a "huge" New York Giants fan, "Lawrence Taylor, Phil Simms, all of them," he says.

He and his dad went to Giants' games, and during baseball season, Yankees' games, while his grandfather, a "big Mets fan," occasionally took him to Shea Stadium.

There was a time when he might have imagined playing for the Yankees or Mets one day. His sophomore year in high school, after his family had moved to Glendale, Ariz., he considered concentrating on baseball, a sport he had played since he was "real young," a pitcher and first baseman.

That was after he started growing and quit what he describes as a promising volleyball career.

He played volleyball in the seventh and eighth grades, giving up football after the seventh grade

because it was only a club sport. Volleyball, however, "was a school sport," he says.

"I had to give one up, so I figured I would give up the club sport."

He hadn't played much organized football to that point, anyway. Even though he wanted to play, his mom wouldn't let him because of a concern over his physical well-being.

His one season of organized football in New Jersey, he played offensive guard and nose tackle, earning the team's most valuable player award but not his mom's endorsement to continue.

As a result, he channeled his athletic interests into basketball and baseball. He could bat from either side of the plate, right- or left-handed, and "I was a real power hitter," he says.

So even though he would be successful at football in the sixth and seventh grades, and again as a high school sophomore, "I got bounced around on the varsity a little bit and I was doubting myself, thinking about just concentrating on baseball. Football was good, but I was kind of undersized."

By then, he stood 6-feet tall and weighed 227 pounds, he says, too squatty for volleyball — he had been an outside hitter and then a setter — and not big enough for an offensive lineman on the varsity of a large high school, which had only recently opened its doors when he enrolled.

He was the school's first graduate to receive a major college scholarship in any sport.

Moving to Arizona, just north of Phoenix, on the verge of becoming a teenager and going from small schools to big schools was difficult, "real tough, making all new friends," says Incognito. "I really just hung out with my family the first year I lived there. I missed the old neighborhood."

But Glendale offered many things that northern New Jersey didn't, "dirt-bike riding and shooting guns in the desert; that was a real big deal. I never got to do that in New Jersey," he says.

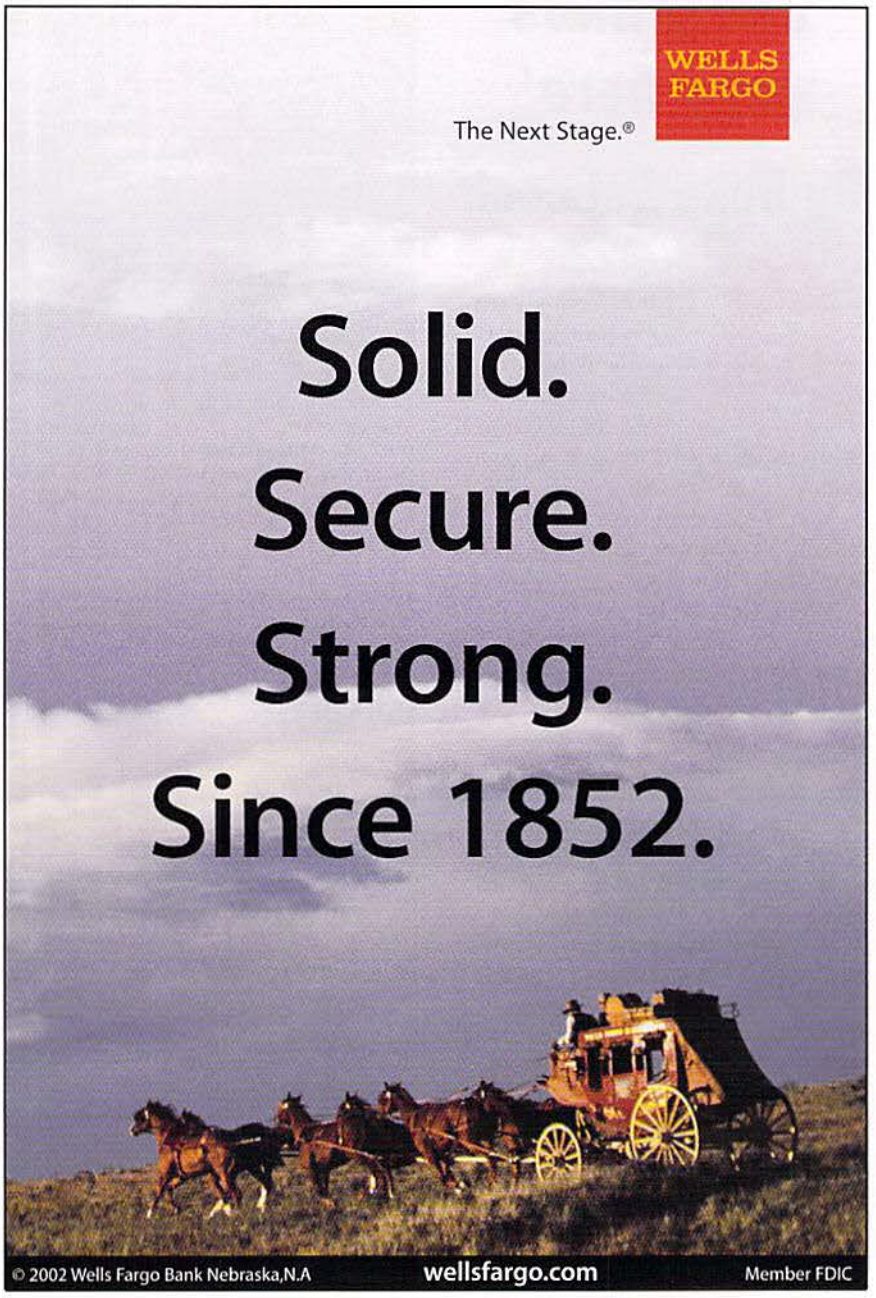
He never would have envisioned becoming a beach volleyball player in New Jersey, either, and for a brief period, that was a dream. He had friends who went on to play at UCLA and USC.

"I got bounced around on the varsity a little bit and I was doubting myself, thinking about just concentrating on baseball. Football was good, but I was kind of undersized."
— Richie Incognito on the start of his high school career

When he hit a "growing spurt" in high school, however, he put aside the other sports and focused on football. "I'm happy with my decision," says Nebraska's sophomore offensive tackle.

Most of the time he is, anyway. "Sometimes during two-a-days, I wish I would have stuck with baseball," he says with a smile that argues otherwise. "I love football."

Oh yes, his has put his tomato-throwing days behind him. Chris Simms "had an arm," he says. So did he, as a budding pitcher. But because of the age difference, it wasn't quite good enough. ■



All in the

'We're some of the lucky guys who have had our fathers play here'

FEATURE STORY

By Mike Babcock

A highlight of Brett Lindstrom's career at Nebraska was a moment he shared with his dad on the field at Memorial Stadium prior to the opening game against Oklahoma State.

Dan Lindstrom was among the 800 or so former Cornhuskers in attendance that day.

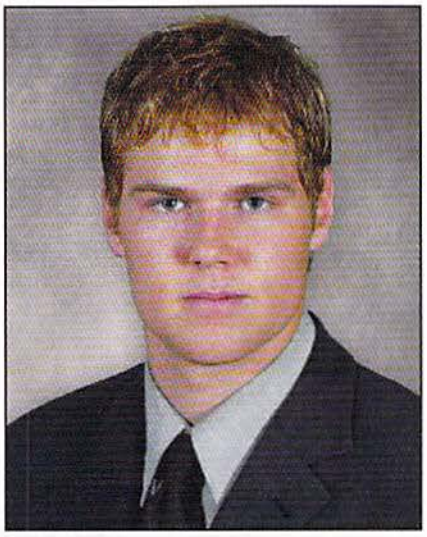
"We're not the type of people that say, 'I love you,'" Brett says. "But he came up to me on the field and said, 'I'm proud of you, Brett.' I was kind of taken aback by that."

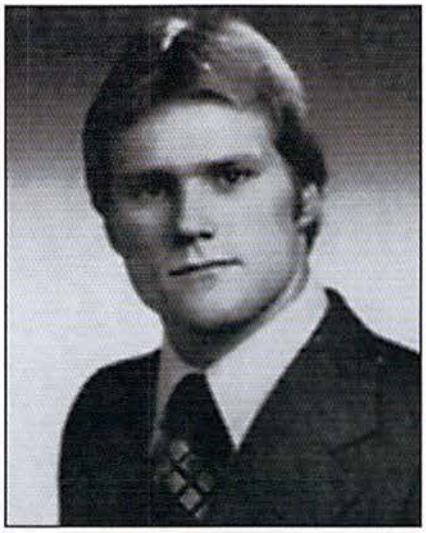
That's probably a typical reaction for a 22-year-old in such a situation. "It's just kind of weird," says Brett, a senior walk-on.

In many ways, Brett Lindstrom was born to be a Cornhusker.

Among the family photos is one of him — at age 2, perhaps — wearing a small red jersey with "Lindstrom" on the back, alongside his dad in a No. 98 Nebraska jersey. He remembers wearing his dad's helmet and watching the Cornhuskers on television by the time he was 5.

His uncles, Roger Lindstrom and Scott Lindstrom, also were Cornhusker walkons. So Nebraska football "was such an influence in my family," he says. "It just seemed right to come here. I guess I felt that I wanted to carry on the tradition or legacy of coming here and playing."





Scott Bruhn

Senior quarterback Brett Lindstrom (above) is the son of Dan Lindstrom (below), a three-year letterman as a defensive end from 1978-80. Other second-generation Huskers include senior I-back Josh Davis (far right), whose father Tony (near right) was a Husker I-back from 1973-75.

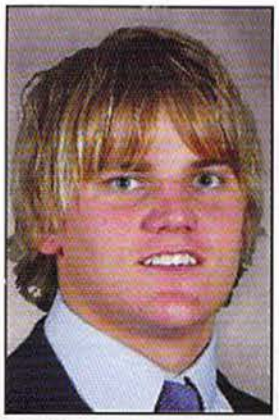
He hasn't played much, appearing in only three games prior to this season, and then only briefly. He began as a quarterback, moved to

e Family

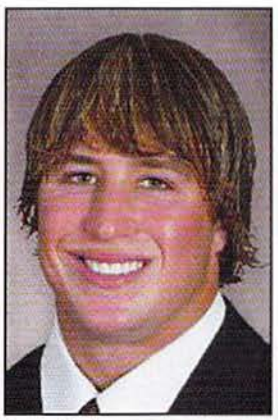
defense and is now a quarterback again.

Occasionally, he wonders what might have happened had he picked another school, the way his younger brother Tyler did. Tyler Lindstrom is a sophomore linebacker at Baylor.

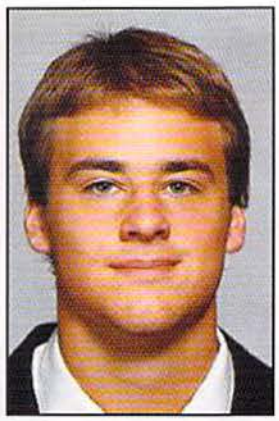
Brett could have gone to the Air Force Academy following his graduation at Omaha's Millard West High, where current Cornhusker graduate assistant Dan McLaughlin coached


Dan Burrow

Josh Davis


Ross Pilkington

Barrett Ruud


Bo Ruud

Second-Generation Huskers

him. But growing up in Nebraska, with family connections to Cornhusker football, he has no regrets.

His dad has told him that when he looks back on the experience, it won't matter whether he was a starter or never played, "the fact you made it through four and a half years says something."

As he nears the end of his career, he realizes the wisdom of his dad's words.

From the beginning, "he let me know it was tough and to work through it, all the ups and downs," Brett says. "As long as you don't quit then it's all worth it in the end, perseverance.

"He's been there so he knows what I've been through." And vice versa.

Five other Cornhuskers could say the same thing, after following their fathers to Nebraska to play football: Barrett Ruud, Bo Ruud, Ross Pilkington, Dan Burrow and Josh Davis.

"We're some of the lucky guys, who have had our fathers play here," says Davis. "They can give you experiences they had here and maybe some advice. It's kind of an extra benefit."

His dad, Tony, was a teammate of the Ruud brothers' dad, Tom, and Pilkington's dad, Greg, on the 1971 Cornhusker freshman team. All three played offense, in the backfield.

Tony Davis and Greg Pilkington were the leading rushers, with six touchdowns between them, while Ruud was the starting fullback. He moved to linebacker in the spring of his freshman year and went on to become a first-round NFL draft pick of the Buffalo Bills. Pilkington's football career was cut short by injury, and he transferred to Northern Colorado, where he played baseball.

Uncles John Ruud and Bob Martin as well as great-grandfather Clarence Swanson also preceded the Ruud brothers in the Nebraska football program. For them, it is really a family affair.

Burrow's dad, Jimmy, transferred to Nebraska from Mississippi and was a teammate of Davis and Ruud. Burrow's brother Jamie finished his career as a Cornhusker linebacker in 2001.

Dan Lindstrom, a walkon like his son, was a Nebraska teammate of linebackers coach Jimmy Williams. They both played defensive end, in fact. So when Williams arrived after last season, Brett made a point of introducing himself. It's "weird" to imagine that, he says. So is imagining that his uncle Roger was a teammate of assistant head coach and quarterbacks coach Turner Gill.

He keeps in touch with both uncles. Roger lives in Phoenix. Scott farms near Oakland, Neb., where his dad grew up. Brett hasn't asked Gill for stories about Roger, a wingback. He knows head football trainer Doak Ostergard "has a few stories, but he won't tell me," says Brett.

"He said that I'd have to ask for permission first."

Dan Lindstrom never forced either of his sons to play football, and he wanted them to wait until they were in high school to begin "so we didn't get burned out," Brett says. What he did demand of them, however, was that once they began something, they saw it through to the finish.

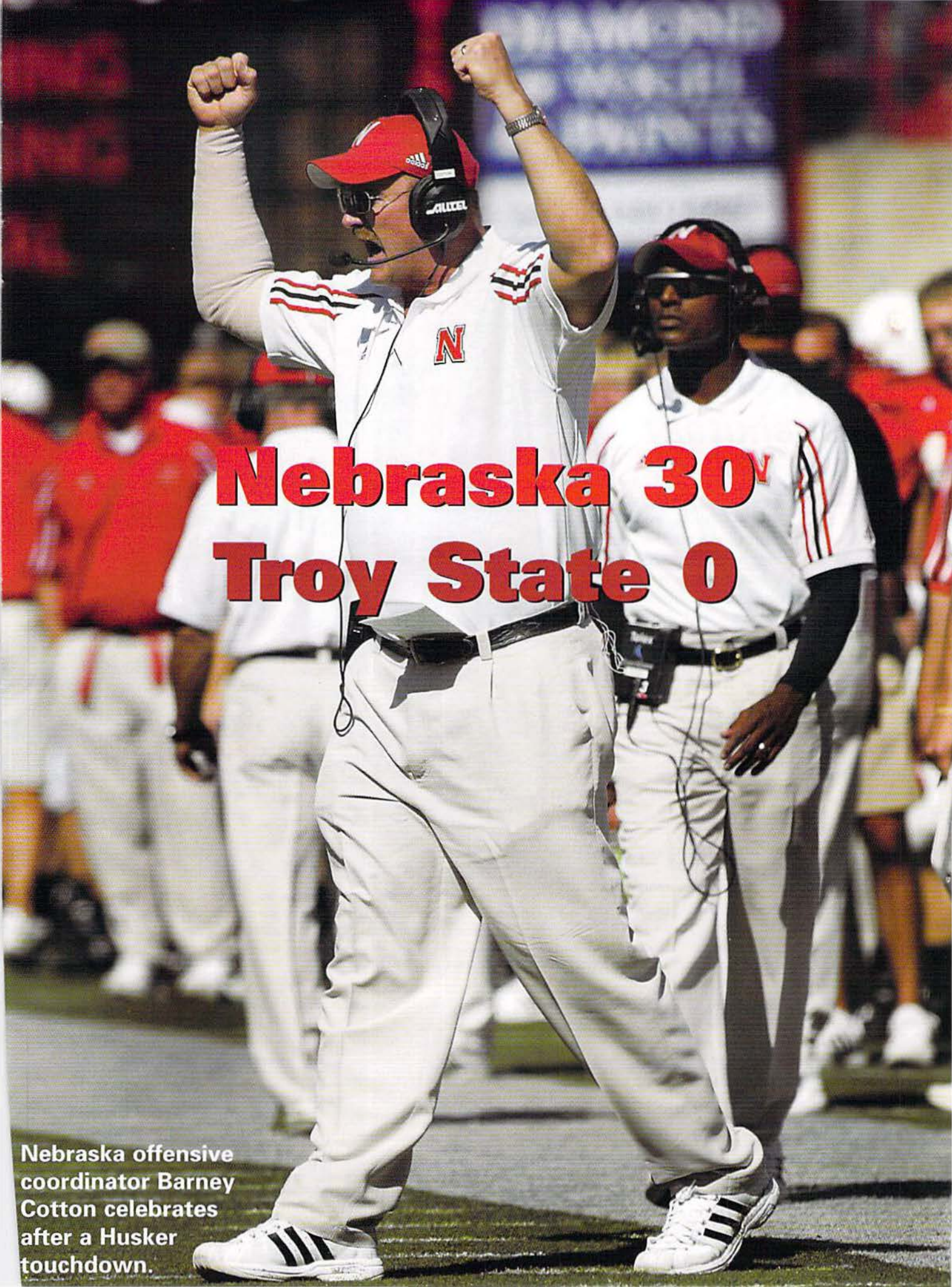
His dad called recently, after looking at a Nebraska roster from the fall of 1999, when Brett walked on, "the scholarship players and walkons who came in," says Brett.

"He said about 40 percent are left. I realized a lot had quit, but that was interesting. We sit at the training table and reminisce about the people who came in. It's kind of funny."

A year from now, Brett expects to be working in an investment firm in Omaha, alongside his dad. He already has a job, even though he has never met the man who will hire him. "My dad told his boss, 'My son is looking at coming here.' And his boss said, 'Your son plays for Nebraska? He's hired.' He knows the work you put in here is probably going to translate into the business world," Brett says.

Brett looks forward to that because he and his dad are close. They're also considering coaching a youth-league football team together. His dad coached him, "so I was thinking it would be fun," he says.

That their brief talk before the opener was special is easily understood. "You can't really comprehend it," Brett says. "He was playing here before I was born, standing here 23 years ago." ■



Nebraska 30
Troy State 0

Nebraska offensive coordinator Barney Cotton celebrates after a Husker touchdown.

Under P

Huskers get 6 sacks, force 4 turnovers in recording first shutout

A pre-game storyline was that Troy State would line up and try to run the ball at Nebraska, with an offensive front that figured to be the most physical the Cornhuskers had faced. So a mandatory post-game question was whether the Trojans' offensive line had, in fact, been the toughest.

Cornhusker defensive end Trevor Johnson did his best to be tactful in answering. "They were a good offensive line, but we just came out and brought it to them," he said.

Most physical? "It's hard to say that when we shut them down so much," he said.

Nebraska shut down the Trojans, and shut them out, 30-0.

"We shut them down in every aspect," said Johnson.

A week ago, in a 33-24 upset of Marshall, Troy State rushed for 254 yards. Against the Cornhuskers, it managed only 66 yards on the ground, and 150 yards total.

The Trojans didn't cross the 50-yard line until 5 minutes and 45 seconds into the third quarter, and they ran only three plays from scrimmage in Nebraska territory, total.

The third play on Nebraska's side of the 50 was also the last of the game.

"I think that was a pretty decent offense, a pretty good offense, that we were playing," Cornhusker defensive coordinator Bo Pelini said.

Nebraska defensive end Titus Adams (above) returns a fumble recovery in the second quarter, one of four Troy State turnovers. Safety Jerrell Pippens (31) and defensive end Trevor Johnson (88) celebrate (right) after a sack of Trojan quarterback Aaron Leak (7). Johnson had 1.5 sacks.

But "they didn't look very good today.

"I think that's a credit to our guys."

As they have done in every game to date, Pelini's guys wreaked havoc, forcing four turnovers — two interceptions and two fumble recoveries — and sacking the Trojans' Aaron Leak six times. "We got a lot of good hits on him," said Johnson, who had 1.5 sacks. "He didn't get in a groove."

No groove, but a rut, certainly.

Applying pressure has been a key to Nebraska's having forced 19

By Mike Babcock
Photos by Scott Bruhn

Pressure

Game Story

turnovers this season. "It's obvious we've been able to get to quarterbacks and harass them some," Coach Frank Solich said.

"That's always a big factor in turnovers." That and speed.

The Cornhuskers didn't capitalize on the turnovers the way they have in previous games, however. The only one they converted into points was the third, a fumble forced by Johnson and recovered by cornerback Fabian Washington at the Troy State 22-yard line late in the first half.

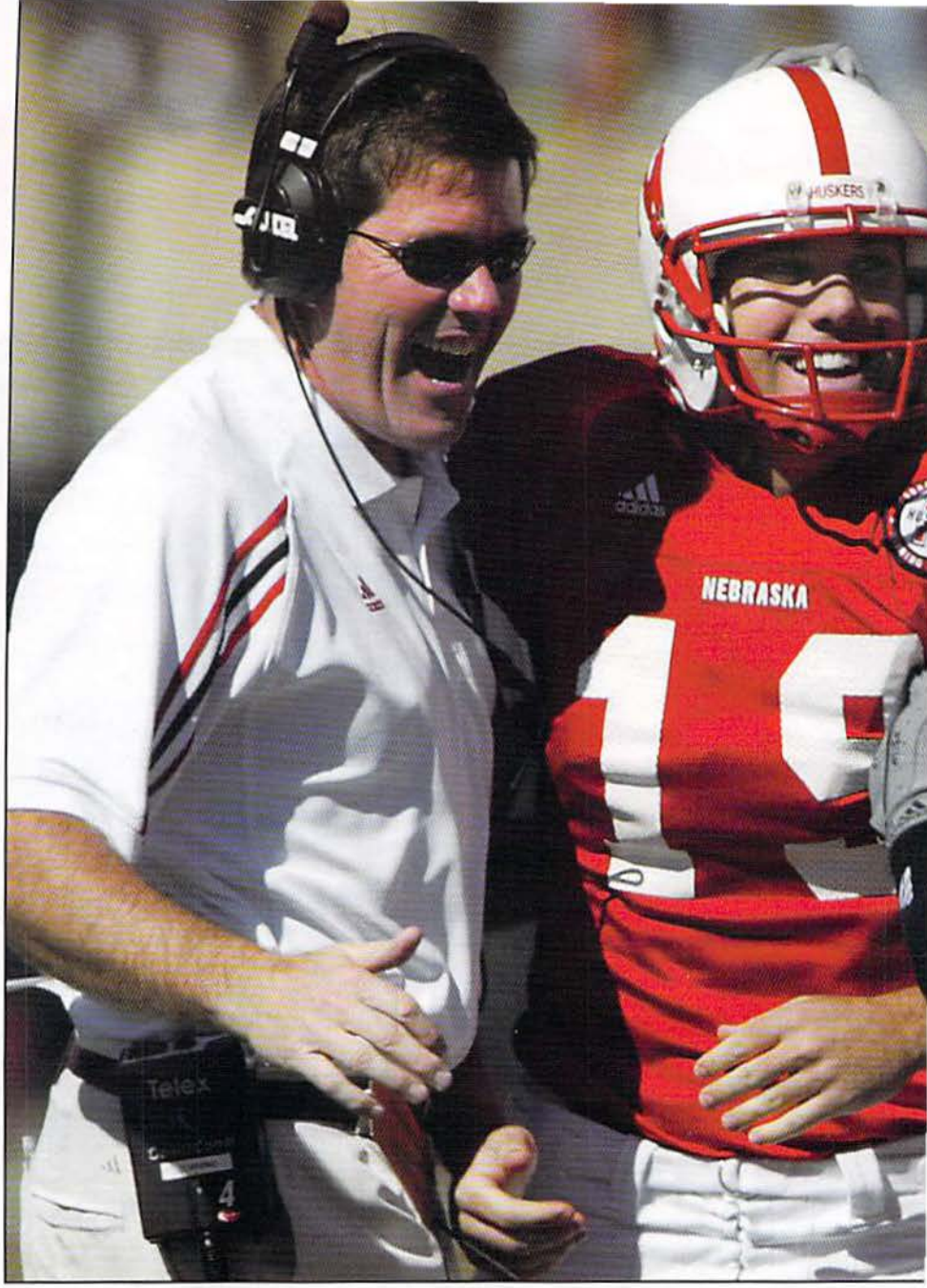
Quarterback Jammal Lord scored four plays later, from 1 yard for a 10-0 halftime lead.

As it turned out, that and three second-half touchdowns were window dressing. All Nebraska really needed was a 40-yard, David Dyches field goal with 3:46 left in the first quarter.

The shutout, the Cornhuskers' first since a 59-0 pasting of Baylor on Oct. 21, 2000, "was real important," said Johnson. "That's a statement about how good our defense is."

Despite a fourth-quarter blip at

NU nose tackle Patrick Kabongo continues to pursue a Troy State ball carrier after losing his helmet.



Nebraska assistant coach Scott Downing (left) and cornerback Fabian Washington (3) congratu
yard punt from the NU 16 in the third quarter.

Southern Mississippi, with reserves playing, Nebraska went into the game ranked first nationally in total defense, and fourth in scoring defense.

"You love seeing those goose eggs up there," Johnson said.

Reserves also finished up against Troy State and "did a great job," he said. Back-ups Kellen Huston and Brandon Teamer even got into the sack act, with Teamer teaming with Johnson on one.

"I think it's always special to have a shutout," said Pelini. "They don't come along very often, especially when you're playing a pretty good football team.

"They had some guys on that side of the ball that can make some plays."

The Cornhuskers didn't make as many plays on offense as they would have liked, either. As the game went along, however, they got better. "I'm very pleased with the win; don't misunderstand me," Solich said. "But it seemed like it was almost two different halves in terms of offensive production."

Nebraska had 143 yards at halftime, and 346 for the game.

As was the case at Southern Mississippi, the Cornhuskers struggled in particular running the ball, finishing with 186 yards on 47 rushes. Lord rushed for 72 yards and two touchdowns.

He also teamed with tight end Matt Herian on a 77-yard pass play, to set up a 3-yard touchdown run by I-back Cory Ross. Herian got behind the safety and would have scored but was tripped up.

"I didn't really think about diving for the end zone. I probably should have," said Herian, who would get a touchdown later, on a 21-yard pass from back-up quarterback Joe Dailey.

The first-half problems, which included a pair of missed field goals by Dyches, were "frustrating," Solich said. "We had opportunities to get points on the board and didn't get it done. Hopefully, we can get to where we're putting four quarters together on the offensive side of it.

"Very early on, we weren't controlling the line of scrimmage, and that, of course, is troublesome. But the real key is, you play four quarters of football. We ended up . . . turning that around."

Nebraska's offensive problems were nothing compared to what Troy State faced. The Trojans had only 51 yards in the first half, with 19 of their

late punter Kyle Larson (middle) after Larson's 71-

24 plays rushes for a net of 19 yards.

"The bottom line is, we stopped the run early," said Pelini. "When you do that, you can dictate to them. We got them in a lot of second-and-long (situations). That's how you play good defense, stop the run and get them in winnable situations. Things are heading in the right direction.

"But we have a lot of improvement to make."

The players understand that, according to Johnson.

"Our goal isn't to win five games. It's to win it all," he said.

"We know we're a good defense. But we're not content." ■

GAME NOTES

Notes And Quotes From The Troy State Game

BLACKSHIRTS ARE GOOD ENOUGH

Nebraska's defense earned the respect of Troy State Coach Larry Blakeney. "We faced a very good defense that is going to be reckoned with for the remainder of the season," he said.

"They are good enough to take this team all the way."

Even though the Trojans were coming off a 33-24 upset of Marshall, "we might have played better than we did last Saturday, despite the way the scoreboard read," said Blakeney.

SANS HELMET

Cornhusker nose tackle Patrick Kabongo, who started in place of an injured Ryon Bingham, was credited with three tackles, one of which he made without his helmet.

Despite having his helmet pulled off by an overzealous Troy State offensive lineman, "I said, 'All right, I'll make the tackle,' " Kabongo said. "All I wanted to do was hit him hard."

He and the rest of Nebraska's defense were ready for the challenge of a Trojan offense that was going to line up and run. "If anybody says, 'Let's play smash-mouth,' we say, 'Let's do it.' We line up everybody and expect a street fight," said Kabongo. "We came out today with a lot of excitement."

AMONG THE MISSING

Nebraska was without three starters, who were sidelined by injuries: strong safety Philip Bland, nose tackle Ryon Bingham and offensive guard Jake Andersen. Defensive end Adam Carriker also missed because of injury. Whether or not any or all of them will return this week, "I think there's a chance," said Coach Frank Solich. "I'm hoping there's a chance that we can have them all back, but we'll see."

In addition, starting center Josh Sewell suffered a knee injury in the fourth quarter.

"It doesn't look like it's an extremely serious injury that would keep him out long term, so we're hoping that he's able to practice next week and play," Solich said.

With Andersen sidelined, sophomore Brandon Koch, a walk-on from Gothenburg, Neb., got his first start. True freshman offensive guard Greg Austin also played for the first time to become only the fourth true freshman to play in Nebraska's offensive line since freshman eligibility was restored in the early 1970s. The others were Jake Young, Will Shields and Toniu Fonoti.

HAS HIS BACK

No one appreciates Nebraska's defense more than quarterback Jammal Lord, who led the Cornhuskers with 72 yards rushing and two touchdowns and completed 7-of-12 passes for 135 yards and one touchdown. "Our defense is playing lights out, running around like madmen," he said.

"If I do mess up, our defense can make a stop at any place on the field."

THIRD TIME A CHARM

Tight end Matt Herian was "open the whole game," Lord said.

So even though they didn't hook up on two long pass routes in the first half, Lord came back to him in the third quarter, for a 77-yard gain that set up a 3-yard touchdown run by I-back Cory Ross.

"Coach (Barney) Cotton said we were going to keep trying," said Herian. "I just kept getting open. I didn't think that third one would work. It was kind of the same play and I got behind him (the defensive back) again. I was surprised he would let me get behind him again."

So was Troy State's Blakeney. "It looked to me that the safety just lost him down field and didn't see him until he was running full speed past him," Blakeney said.

"Their tight end (Herian) is one guy who especially does a good job of making plays."

Herian's ability to get open was a function of how Troy State's defense played. "They showed a tendency to support the run very hard and very quickly," Solich said. "And they weren't lining up all that deep out of some formations with their secondary people. I think they've got very good secondary people. It's just that if you get the running game going at all or if they're going to continue to stop the running game in the manner they were, you're probably going to have your chances down the field."

Nebraska had some of those chances in the first half but didn't capitalize.

SELF DESTRUCTION

Cornhusker weakside linebacker Demorrio Williams was credited with 10 tackles, including eight unassisted, and two of Nebraska's season-high six quarterback sacks. But he was respectful of the visitors. "Those guys played real well out there," he said. "I can't say we were in control.

"They stabbed themselves in the foot with some stupid mistakes."

In addition to four turnovers, the Trojans were penalized 13 times for 115 yards. The personal foul penalties they drew were particularly harmful. ■

Scouting Report

2003 Schedule

1	Aug. 30	Oklahoma St. (4-1), W 17-7	1-0
2	Sept. 6	Utah State (1-4), W 31-7	2-0
3	Sept. 13	Penn State (2-4), W 18-10	3-0
4	Sept. 25	@ Southern Miss (3-2), W 38-14	4-0
5	Oct. 4	Troy State (3-2), W 30-0	5-0
6	Oct. 11	@ Missouri (4-1), 6 p.m., TBS	
7	Oct. 18	Texas A&M (2-3), TBA (Homecoming)	
8	Oct. 25	Iowa State (2-3), TBA	
9	Nov. 1	@ Texas (4-1), TBA	
10	Nov. 8	@ Kansas (4-1), TBA	
11	Nov. 15	Kansas State (4-2), TBA	
12	Nov. 28	@ Colorado (2-3), 11 a.m., ABC	
	Dec. 7	Big 12 Championship at Kansas City, Mo., 7 p.m.	

Big 12 At A Glance

North

	Conf.		All	
Nebraska	1	0	5	0
Kansas	1	0	4	1
Missouri	0	1	4	1
Kansas State	0	1	4	2
Colorado	0	1	2	3
Iowa State	0	1	2	3

South

	Conf.		All	
Oklahoma	1	0	5	0
Texas	1	0	4	1
Texas Tech	1	0	4	1
Baylor	1	0	3	2
Oklahoma State	0	1	4	1
Texas A&M	0	1	2	3

Saturday, Oct. 4

Nebraska 30, Troy State 0
Baylor 42, Colorado 30
Oklahoma 53, Iowa State 7
Oklahoma State 56, UL Lafayette 3
Texas 24, Kansas State 20
Texas Tech 59, Texas A&M 28

Saturday, Oct. 11

Baylor at Texas A&M
Kansas at Colorado
Iowa State at Texas Tech
Kansas State at Oklahoma State
Nebraska at Missouri
Oklahoma vs. Texas (Dallas)

Upcoming Opponents' Schedules

Missouri (4-1)

Aug. 30	Illinois (@ St. Louis), W 22-15
Sept. 6	@ Ball State, W 35-7
Sept. 13	Eastern Illinois, W 37-0
Sept. 20	Middle Tennessee, W 41-40, ot
Sept. 27	@ Kansas, L 35-14
Oct. 11	Nebraska
Oct. 18	@ Oklahoma
Oct. 25	Texas Tech
Nov. 1	Iowa State
Nov. 8	@ Colorado
Nov. 15	Texas A&M
Nov. 22	@ Kansas State

Texas A&M (2-3)

Aug. 30	Arkansas State, W 26-11
Sept. 6	Utah, W 28-26
Sept. 18	@ Virginia Tech, L 35-19
Sept. 27	Pittsburgh, L 37-26
Oct. 4	@ Texas Tech, L 59-28
Oct. 11	Baylor
Oct. 18	@ Nebraska
Oct. 25	Oklahoma State
Nov. 1	Kansas
Nov. 8	@ Oklahoma
Nov. 15	@ Missouri
Nov. 28	Texas

Game 6

At Missouri
Oct. 11

Location: Columbia, Mo.
Enrollment: 24,847
2003 record: 4-1
Coach: Gary Pinkel, 3rd year
Series: Nebraska leads 61-32-3

Time: 6 p.m. CDT, TBS
Memorial Stadium, Columbia, Mo.

Tiger to Watch

Sophomore quarterback Brad Smith has picked up right where he left off in an impressive season as a redshirt freshman. Smith has completed 66.9 percent of his passes in throwing for 704 yards and 8 touchdowns. He has rushed for 387 yards and 3 scores. Last year, he had 2,333 yards passing and 1,029 on the ground.

Quick Facts

Missouri got off to a 4-0 start for only the 12th time in school history before losing 35-14 at Kansas Sept. 27. The Tigers had an off week to prepare for Nebraska.

Since the rule was put into effect for the 1996 season, Missouri leads the nation with 9 overtime games played. With the 41-40 win over Middle Tennessee State, the Tigers improved to 6-3 in overtime games. One of those losses was the 45-38 setback to Nebraska in 1997, in which Matt Davison caught the kicked ball to send the game to overtime.

Missouri's quarterback isn't the only Smith putting up impressive numbers. Defensive end Brian Smith, a redshirt freshman, has 6 sacks, which put him atop the NCAA statistics last week.

On Deck

Texas A&M
Oct. 18

Location: College Station, Texas
Enrollment: 45,083
2003 record: 2-3
Coach: Dennis Franchione, 1st year
Series: Nebraska leads 8-2

Time: TBA
Memorial Stadium, Lincoln, Neb.

Tentative 2-Deeps

Nebraska Offense

WR X	2	Ross Pilkington*	6-0	190	So.
	28	Isaiah Fluellen	6-0	180	RFr.
LT	51	Richie Incognito*	6-3	300	So.
	69	Nick Povendo*	6-3	300	Jr.
LG	78	Mike Erickson**	6-4	305	Jr.
	72	Tim Green	6-4	325	Sr.
C	79	Josh Sewell*	6-2	300	Sr.
	64	Kurt Mann	6-3	290	RFr.
RG	71	Jake Andersen*	6-1	300	Jr.
	75	Brandon Koch	6-3	310	So.
RT	68	Dan Vili Waldrop***	6-5	350	Sr.
	68	Darren DeLone	6-5	320	Jr.
TE Y	11	Matt Herian*	6-5	240	So.
	82	Phil Peetz**	6-2	270	Sr.
QB	5	Jammal Lord***	6-2	220	Sr.
	12	Joe Dailey	6-0	200	Fr.
FB	4	Judd Davies***	6-0	250	Sr.
	45	Steve Kriewald**	5-10	250	Jr.
IB	1	Josh Davis**	5-11	205	Sr.
	9	David Horne*	6-0	200	So.
WR Z	10	Mark LeFlore*	5-11	185	So.
	13	Tim Liley*	6-2	205	Sr.
PK	27	David Dyches	6-1	190	Fr.

Nebraska Defense

LDE	5	Benard Thomas**	6-4	265	Jr.
	96	Titus Adams*	6-3	290	So.
NT	59	Ryon Bingham**	6-3	290	Sr.
	94	Patrick Kabongo***	6-6	320	Sr.
DT	66	Le Kevin Smith*	6-2	305	So.
	74	Brandon Teamer	6-5	270	Fr.
RDE	88	Trevor Johnson***	6-4	255	Sr.
	90	Adam Carriker	6-6	260	RFr.
BLB	2	T.J. Hollowell***	6-0	230	Sr.
	11	Ira Cooper**	6-2	230	Jr.
MLB	38	Barrett Ruud*	6-2	240	Jr.
	54	Chad Sievers*	6-3	230	Jr.
WLB	7	Demorrio Williams	6-1	210	Sr.
	39	Chad Buller*	5-11	215	Sr.
LCB	3	Fabian Washington*	5-11	175	So.
	4	Terrell Butler*	5-10	190	Sr.
FS	20	Josh Bullocks*	6-1	195	So.
	31	Jerrell Pippens***	6-2	195	Sr.
SS	21	Philip Bland**	5-11	205	Jr.
or	14	Daniel Bullocks*	6-1	200	So.
RCB	28	Pat Ricketts***	5-11	180	Sr.
or	1	Lornell McPherson**	5-9	175	Jr.
P	19	Kyle Larson**	6-0	205	Sr.

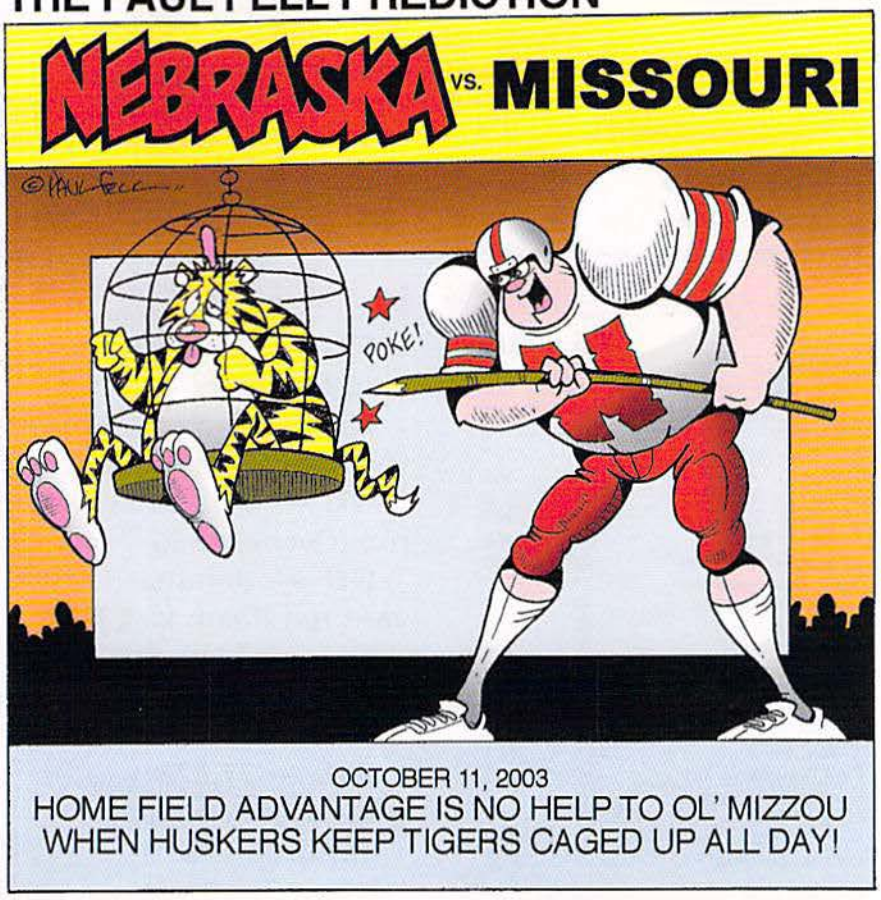
Missouri Offense

WR X	3	Darius Outlaw***	6-3	185	Sr.
	86	Brad Ekwerekwu	6-3	190	Fr.
WT	76	Rob Droege***	6-6	300	Sr.
	68	Tony Clinker*	6-4	297	Jr.
WG	52	Tony Palmer*	6-2	303	So.
	57	Joe Gianino*	6-3	300	Jr.
C	70	A.J. Ricker***	6-4	295	Sr.
	69	Scott Sells**	6-5	295	Sr.
SG	58	Cliff Young**	6-2	300	Sr.
	55	Mike Cook	6-2	315	RFr.
ST	78	Scott Paffrath*	6-5	290	Jr.
or	63	Steven Sanchez	6-4	305	Sr.
TE	89	J.D. McCoy***	6-1	258	Sr.
	84	Victor Sesay	6-6	255	Jr.
QB	16	Brad Smith*	6-2	205	So.
	19	Santino Riccio	6-2	200	So.
TB	39	Zack Abron***	5-9	225	Sr.
	2	Damien Nash	5-11	210	So.
WR H	87	Thomson Omboga**	6-2	189	Jr.
	1	Marcus James***	5-8	174	Sr.
WR Z	12	Sean Coffey*	6-5	224	So.
	99	Arnold Britt	6-2	182	So.
PK	34	Michael Matheny*	6-2	195	Sr.

Missouri Defense

DE	39	Brian Smith	6-3	220	RFr.
	92	Fabian Bean	6-4	280	RFr.
DT	97	Atiyyah Ellison*	6-4	290	Jr.
	73	Russ Bell*	6-2	300	Sr.
N	99	C.J. Mosley*	6-3	289	So.
	94	Phil Pitts**	6-1	276	Jr.
DE	96	Zach Ville	6-2	272	Jr.
	64	Rusty Groth	6-4	270	Sr.
LB	21	Brandon Barnes**	6-3	230	Sr.
	40	Derrick Ming*	5-11	243	So.
LB	24	James Kinney**	6-1	233	Jr.
	46	Henry Sweat*	6-0	225	Jr.
WH	6	Jason Simpson*	6-0	198	So.
	18	Terrence Curry**	5-10	177	Sr.
ROV	33	Dedrick Harrington	6-3	223	RFr.
	31	Quincy Wade*	5-9	182	So.
FS	22	Nino Williams	6-1	200	Jr.
	8	David Overstreet	6-0	195	RFr.
CB	17	Calvin Washington*	6-0	192	So.
	45	Shirdonya Mitchell**	6-0	181	Jr.
CB	26	Michael Harden***	5-11	195	Sr.
	36	Marcus King**	5-10	186	Jr.
P	13	Brock Harvey**	6-1	197	Jr.

The Paul Fell Prediction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Picks

Nebraska At Missouri

Brian Hill
Editor

A conference road game at night should be another good test for the unbeaten Huskers. With back-to-back home games to follow, before the road trip to Texas, this shapes up as a key game for Nebraska to maintain its momentum. With the talents of quarterback Brad Smith, the Tigers should score some points, but they will also give up plenty. Missouri has allowed 75 points in its last two games. The Huskers have given up 38 all season. **Nebraska 34, Missouri 20**

Mike Babcock
Contributing Editor

Missouri's stumble at Kansas takes some of the luster off this match-up. The Tigers' offense will provide a stiff test, but their defense is suspect. Brad Smith has a season's experience, but Nebraska was able to deal with him a year ago. **Nebraska 28, Missouri 17**

Terry Douglass
Grand Island Independent
Sports Editor

This year's Nebraska-Missouri matchup shapes up as one of the most anticipated meetings the series has seen in a long time. The Cornhuskers' defense against the Tigers' offense will be strength versus strength. There's no reason to bet against the Nebraska Blackshirts yet. **Nebraska 31, Missouri 24**

Game Stats

Nebraska Vs. Troy State

Oct. 4, 2003 • Memorial Stadium • Lincoln, Neb.

Score By Quarters

Troy State	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**—**	**0**
Nebraska	**3**	**7**	**13**	**7**	**—**	**30**

Team Stats

	TS	NU
First Downs	10	15
Rushing	5	8
Passing	5	5
Penalty	0	2
Rushing Attempts	37	47
Yards Gained Rushing	121	195
Yards Lost Rushing	55	9
Net Yards Rushing	66	186
Net Yards Passing	84	160
Passes Attempted	23	15
Passes Completed	11	9
Had Intercepted	2	1
Total Plays	60	62
Total Net Yards	150	346
Avg. Gain Per Play	2.5	5.6
Fumbles-Lost	3-2	4-2
Penalties-Yards	13-115	5-36
Punts-Yards	10-415	3-134
Avg. Per Punt	41.5	44.7
Punt Returns-Yards	0-0	5-49
Interceptions-Yards	1-0	2-37
Fumble Returns-Yards	0-0	1-6
Kickoff Returns-Yards	2-31	0-0
Possession Time	31:28	28:32

Scoring

NU — David Dyches 40-yard field goal

NU — Jammal Lord 1-yard run (Dyches kick)

NU — Cory Ross 3-yard run (Dyches kick)

NU — Jammal Lord 6-yard run (team kick failed)

NU — Matt Herian 21-yard pass from Joe Dailey (Dyches kick)

Att. — 77,825

Weather — sunny

Temp. — 75

Individual Statistics

NEBRASKA

RUSHING

Name	Att.	Yds.	YPC	LNG	TD
Lord, J.	14	72	5.1	16	2
Davis, J.	9	38	4.2	9	0
Dailey, J.	4	32	8.0	20	0
Ross, C.	6	16	2.7	6	1
Fluellen, I.	2	11	5.5	10	0
Davies, J.	2	8	4.0	7	0
Kriewald, S.	1	4	4.0	4	0
Todd, D.	1	4	4.0	4	0
Horne, D.	6	4	0.7	2	0
Miller, R.	2	-3	-1.5	4	0

PASSING

Name	C-A-I	Pct.	Yds.	TD
Lord, J.	7-12-1	58.3	135	0
Dailey, J.	2-3-0	66.7	25	1

RECEIVING

Name	No.	Yds.	YPC	LNG	TD
Herian, M.	3	110	36.7	77	1
LeFlore, M.	3	14	4.7	7	0
Pilkington, R.	1	20	20.0	20	0
Davies, J.	1	12	12.0	12	0
Davis, J.	1	4	4.0	4	0

PUNTING

Name	No.	Yds.	Avg.	LNG	I20
Larson, K.	3	134	44.7	71	3

PUNT RETURNS

Name	No.	Yds.	YPR	LNG	TD
Davis, J.	4	19	4.7	15	0
Ross, C.	1	39	30.0	30	0

KICKOFF RETURNS

Name	No.	Yds.	YPR	LNG	TD
None					

FIELD GOALS

Name	Att.	Good	Long
Dyches, D.	3	1	40

DEFENSE

Name	UT	AT	TT	FL	Int.	Sacks
Williams, D.	8	2	10	2-7	0	2-7
Ruud, B.	3	3	6	1-10	0	1-10
Bullocks, D.	2	4	6	2-2	0	0
Johnson, T.	3	2	5	2-11	0	1.5-11
Kabongo, P.	2	2	4	1-1	0	0
Bullocks, J.	2	1	3	0	1-23	0
Washington, F.	2	1	3	0	1-14	0
Smith, L.	2	1	3	1-2	0	0
Ricketts, P.	2	1	3	1-2	0	0
Buller, C.	1	1	2	0	0	0
Pippens, J.	2	0	2	0	0	0
Hollowell, T.	1	1	2	1-7	0	0
Thomas, B.	1	1	2	0	0	0
McPherson, L.	0	2	2	0	0	0
Teamer, B.	0	1	1	1-4	0	0.5-4
Bradley, S.	1	0	1	1-3	0	0
Huston, K.	1	0	1	1-10	0	1-10
Shanle, A.	1	0	1	0	0	0
Ewwaraye, S.	1	0	1	0	0	0
Lohr, J.	0	1	1	0	0	0
Sievers, C.	0	1	1	0	0	0
Siegel, S.	0	1	1	0	0	0
Tomasevicz, C.	0	1	1	0	0	0

TROY STATE

RUSHING

Name	Att.	Yds.	YPC	LNG	TD
Betterson, D.	14	34	2.4	10	0
Samples, J.	2	18	9.0	13	0
Fraser, M.	3	9	3.0	5	0
Leak, A.	18	5	0.3	17	0

PASSING

Name	C-A-I	Pct.	Yds.	TD
Leak, A.	9-19-1	47.4	81	0
Bearden, H.	2-4-1	50.0	3	0

RECEIVING

Name	No.	Yds.	YPC	LNG	TD
Samples, J.	3	27	9.0	11	0
Moore, A.	3	4	1.3	6	0
Rutledge, T.	1	17	17.0	17	0
Hampton, E.	1	13	13.0	13	0
Stewart, B.	1	13	13.0	13	0
Broadhurst, B.	1	12	12.0	12	0
Betterson, D.	1	-2	-1.0	0	0

PUNTING

Name	No.	Yds.	Avg.	LNG	I20
Olmsted, T.	10	415	41.5	53	1

KICKOFF RETURNS

Name	No.	Yds.	YPR	LNG	TD
Fraser, M.	1	27	27.0	27	0
Samples, J.	1	4	4.0	4	0

DEFENSE LEADERS

Name	UT	AT	TT	FL	Int.	Sacks
Davis, B.	7	4	11	0	0	0
Johnson, L.	4	4	8	0	0	0
Ansley, D.	2	5	7	0	1-0	0
Ware, D.	4	2	6	0	0	0
Adams, A.	3	1	4	0	0	0
Reed, R.	3	1	4	0	0	0
Ghent, A.	2	2	4	0	0	0
Farmer, R.	3	0	3	0	0	0
Thomas, E.	1	2	3	1-2	0	0

Scott Bruhn

NU linebacker Demorrio Williams tackles Troy State's DeWhitt Betterson.

2003 Season Stats

RUSHING

Name	G	Att.	Yds.	YPG	TD
Davis, J.	5	85	417	83.4	0
Lord, J.	5	90	340	68.0	5
Horne, D.	5	51	198	39.6	2
Dailey, J.	3	14	76	25.3	0
Ross, C.	5	20	63	12.6	1
Miller, R.	4	4	44	11.0	1
Davies, J.	5	16	44	8.8	2
LeFlore, M.	5	1	21	4.2	0
Fluellen, I.	3	2	11	3.7	0
Kriewald, S.	5	3	6	1.2	0
Todd, D.	2	1	4	2.0	0

PASSING

Name	G	C-A-I	Pct.	Yds.	TD
Lord, J.	5	33-60-3	55.0	482	2
Dailey, J.	3	6-9-1	66.7	72	1

RECEIVING

Name	G	No.	Yds.	YPC	YPG	TD
Herian, M.	5	12	246	20.5	49.2	1
Pilkington, R.	5	12	175	14.6	35.0	1
LeFlore, M.	5	6	41	6.8	8.2	0
Davis, J.	5	3	23	7.7	4.6	0
Davies, J.	5	3	16	5.3	3.2	0
Fluellen, I.	3	1	43	43.0	14.3	1
Horne, D.	5	1	5	5.0	1.0	0
Liley, T.	5	1	5	5.0	1.0	0

FIELD GOALS

Name	G	Att.	Good	Long
Dyches, D.	4	13	10	41
DeAngelis, S.	4	3	1	28

PUNTING

Name	No.	Yds.	Avg.	LNG	I20
Larson, K.	20	843	42.2	71	11

PUNT RETURNS

Name	No.	Yds.	YPR	LNG	TD
Davis, J.	20	193	9.7	30	0
Ross, C.	2	44	22.0	30	0

KICKOFF RETURNS

Name	No.	Yds.	YPR	LNG	TD
Davis, J.	4	111	30.2	40	0
Sievers, C.	1	8	8.0	8	0

DEFENSIVE LEADERS

Name	G	UT	AT	TT	FL	Int.	S/Yds.
Williams, D.	5	32	13	45	8-42	0	6-37
Ruud, B.	5	16	26	42	2-11	0	1-10
Washington, F.	5	19	11	30	2-3	2-14	0
Hollowell, T.	5	15	9	24	2-17	0	1-10
Johnson, T.	5	8	11	19	2-1	0	0
Bullocks, J.	5	6	10	16	0	5-64	0

TEAM STATISTICS

	NU	OPP
Total Offensive Yards	1,759	1,093
Plays	360	310
Average Per Play	4.9	3.5
Average Per Game	351.2	218.6
Net Rushing Yards	1,205	364
Attempts	283	157
TDs Rushing	11	2
Net Passing Yards	554	729
Completions	39	75
Average Per Pass	8.0	4.5
Average Per Catch	14.2	9.7
Average Per Game	110.8	145.8
TDs Passing	3	3
Sacks By-Yards	13-100	5-25
Fumbles-Lost	15-6	14-10
Penalties-Yards	35-258	37-282

Scoring	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	OT	TOT
NU	32	22	60	20	0	134
Opponents	14	17	0	7	0	38

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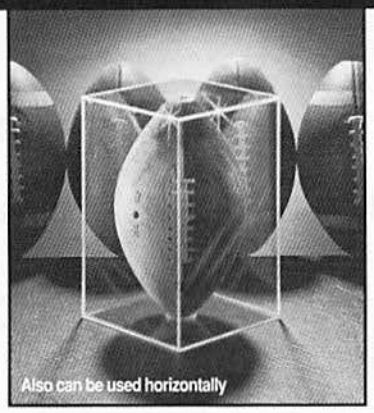

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WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

A Perfect Day

Kicker Klein's record-setting game helped defeat Mizzou

By Mike Babcock

After every field goal attempt, whether successful or not, Ken Kaelin would shake Dale Klein's hand or pat him on the back, encouragement sometimes lacking for kickers.

Kaelin, an up-back on Nebraska's field goal team, congratulated Klein in that manner seven times at Faurot Field in Columbia, Mo., on the afternoon of Oct. 19, 1985.

Klein kicked seven field goals that day, to tie an NCAA Division I-A record. Seven times, Mark Cooper snapped the ball. Seven times, Clete Blakeman set the ball on a tee — no longer allowed by the rules. Seven times, Klein drove the ball through the up-rights, soccer style.

And as always, Kaelin congratulated him after each one.

Nebraska would have won the game even without a 22-yard touchdown run by Doug DuBose midway through the fourth quarter. Klein scored 22 points in the 28-20 victory.

He still shares the record for field goals, as well as records for field goals in a half — five of the seven came before halftime — and "best perfect record of field goals made, game."

He didn't miss, from 32, 22, 43, 44, 29, 43 and 43 yards.

After three or four, he probably could have afforded to miss one and still feel good about what he had accomplished. But by then his confidence was so high, it was almost automatic.

His records have held for nearly 20 years, but "it seems like yesterday," says Klein, who lives in the Denver area and works as an engineer in Lockheed Martin's Atlas program.

Kicker Dale Klein scored 22 points in Nebraska's 28-20 victory at Missouri in 1985.

Though in his estimation, he was a better kicker the next season as a senior, he earned the most recognition as a junior, primarily because of those seven field goals.

Before the trip to Missouri, Klein had ridden an emotional roller coaster since the final regular-season game of his sophomore season, when he missed a 23-yard field goal attempt that would have broken a 7-7 tie with Oklahoma. The Sooners would go on to win the game at Memorial Stadium, 17-7.

The ball hit an upright. And Klein was benched.

The next week, he would remain in his dorm room at Harper Hall for a couple of days, skipping class, unable to face the world. "I felt like a heel," he says, recalling those dark days.

"When you're young like that, you just don't have the experience to handle it."

He endured frustration his junior season as well, beginning as the No. 1 place-kicker, losing the job because of a shaky performance in the opener

against Florida State, regaining it when his replacement, Craig Schnitzler, was sidelined by injury and losing it again, to true freshman Chris Drennan.

The week before the Missouri game, at Oklahoma State, kicking coach Clete Fischer told Klein he would be sharing the place-kicking duties with Drennan. He would handle extra-point kicks and short field-goal attempts, while Drennan would handle kickoffs and long field-goal attempts.

Just before halftime, Nebraska was in position to attempt a 40-yard field goal to increase its lead to 17-3. Was 40 yards long or short? "Who wants it?" Fischer asked.

He was the first to speak up, Klein says, probably because he was older.

Whatever the reason, he made the 40-yard kick, added another also from 40 yards and wouldn't miss until two weeks later in a 17-7 victory against Colorado at Lincoln, a 46-yard attempt.

Speaking up in Stillwater could characterize Klein's football career, and his professional career for that matter. He had picked Nebraska for its engineering program before deciding to walk on, with a goal of playing on the freshman team — coached by Frank Solich — and nothing more.

Earning an engineering degree was always a focus for Klein, the valedictorian of his class at Seward, Neb., High School and an Academic All-American at Nebraska in 1986.

In a sense, he also walked on with Lockheed Martin. During his senior year, Martin Marrieta sent a representative to campus to interview graduating engineering students. Even though his interview application had been rejected, he decided to submit his resume, anyway.

His chemistry lab had been dismissed early, and he had some time before football practice began. The Martin Marrieta representative was packing to leave when he showed up.

In a few minutes time, he had the promise of a job. The representative was impressed by his initiative, by his grade-point average and by his ability to juggle schoolwork and football.

Like walking on to the football team, "you kind of had something to prove," says Klein.

He and wife MiMi have three children: Michael (9), Kylie (8) and Zachary (3). He is teaching Michael to punt a football and will soon begin teaching him how to place kick. He plays soccer, so he has the fundamentals. But the time hasn't been right. There are other factors to consider.

"Maybe he'll kick for Nebraska someday," says Klein, who remains a Cornhusker fan, the most difficult part of living where he does, having to deal with Colorado fans.

Though it's more difficult now, not only because of the kids' activities but also because tickets are harder to come by than when he played, he tries to attend a game or two in Lincoln each season.

He was among those who returned for the Cornhusker reunion held in conjunction with the opening game against Oklahoma State. "You know, this was a great idea," he told Schnitzler.

Klein was near Eric Crouch on the walk from the Lied Center to Memorial Stadium before the game. "It was neat," he says, seeing all the fans calling out Crouch's name as they passed.

Kaelin was among the former teammates he hadn't seen for a long time.

"Do you remember, I would always come up and shake your hand?"

Klein did. He has a videotape of the 1985 Missouri game, which he occasionally watches when family comes to visit: Cooper's snap, Blakeman's hold, and Kaelin's congratulation. ■

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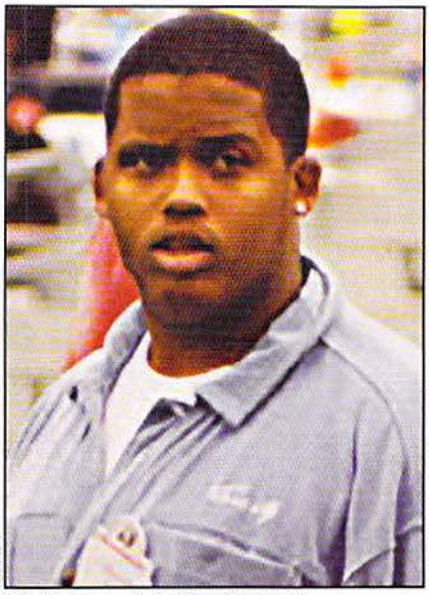
Huskers Search for Tackle Depth

Height, agility, versatility important qualities for offensive tackle candidates

By Doug Horwich

The transition from former offensive line coaches Milt Tenopir and Dan Young to new offensive line coach Barney Cotton has brought about a number of changes on the Husker pipeline. Perhaps the most dramatic change in philosophy involves the offensive tackle position.

In the past, very little if any distinction was made at Nebraska between the type of athletes recruited to play offensive tackle and those recruited to play offensive guard. Because the Husker offense is heavily based on the run, pass protection skills were not emphasized by the former staff to the extent that they are under Coach Cotton.



Rivals.com

Highly regarded offensive tackle prospect Brandon Braxton of Ursuline High School in Youngstown, Ohio, is considering Nebraska.

Although the changes to the Husker offense have thus far been somewhat subtle, the staff's focus on pass blocking fundamentals has been dramatically heightened.

Additionally, while the previous staff frequently took players more suited to offensive guard and placed them at tackle, Cotton has shown more of an NFL mentality regarding the type of athletes he's looking for to play the two positions.

While guards and tackles were previously somewhat interchangeable at Nebraska, Cotton wants his tackles to be tall, with long reach and an ability to move their feet quickly in pass protection. As a result, a few of the offensive tackles currently on the roster who were recruited by Coach Tenopir are really more suited to playing offensive guard.

Aside from 2003 recruit Ryan Schuler, the offensive tackle positions are somewhat lacking in young talent. The recent transfer of Jemayel "Big Smooth" Phillips (who had been moved to guard prior to his

NEBRASKA COMMITMENTS FOR 2004

Player	Hometown (school)	Ht.	Wt.	Pos.
Lance Brandenburgh	Overland Park, Kan. (St. Thomas Aquinas)	6-1	215	LB
Andy Christensen	Bennington, Neb.	6-3	275	DT
Allan Evridge	Papillion, Neb. (Papillion-LaVista)	6-1	205	QB
Michael Keenan	Kansas City, Mo. (Oak Park)	6-2	220	LB
Maurice McClellan	Pawcatuck, Conn. (Stonington)	6-3	210	ATH
D.T. McDowell	Tucker, Ga.	6-1	190	QB
Terrence Nunn	Houston, Texas (Cypress Falls)	6-0	185	WR
Seth Olsen	Omaha, Neb. (Millard North)	6-5	300	OL
Ty Steinkuhler	Lincoln, Neb. (Southwest)	6-3	235	DE
Nathan Swift	Hutchinson, Minn.	6-3	190	WR

departure) has left Cotton with an absence of athletes whose body type and agility conform to what he prefers at the tackle position. As a result, recruiting offensive tackles is a very high priority for the Husker staff this year.

In addition to high school players, the staff also will look to the junior college ranks to find players who could possibly come in and contribute immediately next year.

One of the top high school tackles in the nation this year is Brandon Braxton (6-foot-6, 295 pounds, 5.1-second 40-yard dash) from Ursuline High School in Youngstown, Ohio.

Braxton already has more than 30 written scholarship offers and plans to take one of his five official visits to Lincoln.

Braxton has been taking unofficial visits to some of the schools in his area during the past few weekends and plans to begin taking his official visits once his senior season is over. He is being recruited for Nebraska by defensive coordinator Bo Pelini.

"Coach Pelini from Nebraska is recruiting me," Braxton said. "He's a pretty nice dude. He's a friend of my high school coach. They went to high school together."

Braxton does not currently have a formal list of favorites but does have an idea of which schools he's likely to visit.

"I plan to visit Nebraska and Oklahoma," he said. "I might go down to Miami, Georgia or LSU. I'll probably at least go to one of those schools down south. Then, I might take one of my visits to California, like to USC or something. My visits won't necessarily be my top five. My visits will be to schools that I can't easily visit. I've seen all of the schools around here."

While some feel that Braxton will end up at Ohio State, he maintains that he is wide open regarding his decision and insists that he doesn't have a favorite. Nebraska appears likely to receive an official visit from him in December.

Another athlete who is being pursued by the Husker staff is Nyere Aumaitre (6-5, 310, 5.2) from Woodrow Wilson High School in Camden, N.J.

Aumaitre already boasts more than 40 written offers. Although

RECRUITING NOTES

Top Prospects Still Eyeing NU

By Rick Shaw

One of the top offensive line prospects in the country recently narrowed his list of suitors to eight finalists. Jeff Byers, a 6-foot-4, 280-pound center from Loveland High in Loveland, Colo., will choose among offers from Colorado, Iowa, Nebraska, Notre Dame, Ohio State, Texas, UCLA, and USC.

"I don't have a leader right now.," he said. "I'm just keeping everyone on an even playing field."

The blue-chipper from Colorado is one of the most dominating linemen to come out of the high school ranks in recent years. One recruiting service lists Byers as the top overall recruit in the nation. Rivals.com regards him as the country's top center prospect and one of the top 15 prospects overall.

Byers, who already has taken official visits to Ohio State and Iowa, said that he will visit all of his finalists this fall before making a final decision. He continues to pay close attention to the seasons of two Loveland alumni who are playing in Lincoln. I-back Josh Davis and wide receiver Ross Pilkington both starred at Loveland before coming to Nebraska.

— It's hard to find flaw with running back prospect Darius Walker. The 5-11, 197-pound athlete out of Buford High in Buford, Ga., used his 4.4-second speed in the 40 and 36-inch vertical leap to run for just under 2,000 yards (9.1 yards per carry) as a junior in 2002. Walker also carries a 4.0 cumulative GPA and was a big fan of the Huskers while growing up.

Walker is a hot commodity on the recruiting circuit, as he is being pursued heavily by more than 50 schools from coast to coast. Some of the schools on his short list include Stanford, Notre Dame, Auburn, Ohio State, Florida State and Nebraska.

Walker said that he would definitely travel to Lincoln to check out his childhood favorite before finalizing his college choice.

"Nebraska is kind of high on my list," Walker said. "One way or another (officially or unofficially), I'll visit them. Nebraska tells me that they need a big time running back. I think I could have an impact there."

— Nebraska is making a concerted effort to pull in a recruit or two from Florida this season. One player from the Sunshine State who hopes to visit Nebraska is Sirdarean Adams.

The 6-1, 215-pound blue-chipper from Bayshore High in Bradenton, Fla., can play a number of positions at the college level. Michigan State likes Adams' 4.4 second speed at the wide receiver position. Miami envisions Adams as a super safety prospect. Nebraska thinks Adams could be a star running back in Lincoln.

Adams is in frequent contact with Bayshore alum Fabian Washington, a starting cornerback at Nebraska. "Fabian is doing real good this season," Adams said. "I just talked to him after his game against Southern Mississippi last week.

"I'm looking seriously at about seven teams right now . . . but without a doubt, I'll visit Nebraska. There ain't no 'ifs,' 'ands' or 'buts' about it." ■

many schools like him as an offensive guard, he has the athletic ability, height and agility to play the tackle position as well.

Nebraska was one of the first schools to contact Aumaitre, and he has consistently listed the Huskers among his favorites, along with Ohio State, Virginia, Tennessee, North Carolina, Maryland, Florida, Boston College and Rutgers.

"I'm still high on Nebraska," Aumaitre said. "They haven't lost any ground with me. I'm still in search right now though of what school really wants me. I know Nebraska wants me, but I don't want to cut anybody else out of the equation until I check them out.

"I'm open minded with regard to schools. I'm interested in schools that call me as soon as they are allowed to call me. I don't want to look at schools that call me just because other schools call. I want to go to a place that wants me."

Aumaitre plans to be diligent about the process and conduct a thorough evaluation of his favorite schools.

"I want to take all of my visits," he said. "I want to weigh my options before making a decision. If a coach really wants you, they'll hold the scholarship. I'm not going to feel pressure from schools who tell me that they only have one scholarship left for an offensive lineman, or things like that."

Aumaitre is being recruited for Nebraska by Jimmy Williams, with whom he has developed a solid relationship.

"Coach Jimmy Williams of Nebraska can speak very well," he said. "He's persuasive.

"Nebraska and Rutgers were the schools that sent me my first letters. I want to meet the Nebraska offensive line coach and see what he's all about.

"I've seen the stadium on the Internet, and I really like it. A lot of linemen go to 'the League' from Nebraska."

Aumaitre said he is open to going to school anywhere in the country and actually prefers colder climates.

"The only knock against Florida and Tennessee and the southern schools is the weather," he said. "I don't like the heat. I want to go somewhere that has all four seasons and doesn't get too hot. Nebraska and Ohio have all of the seasons. I don't mind the cold."

Aumaitre is also being encouraged by his mother to leave the area for college.

"My mom wants me to go away to college," Aumaitre said. "She went to Rutgers, and she wants me to experience something different. She said that she wants me to enjoy college life wherever I go, and she'll support me."

Both Braxton and Aumaitre intend to wait until at least December before making a decision, and both are expected to take an official visit to Lincoln once their football seasons have concluded.

Millard North's Seth Olsen (6-5, 300), one of Nebraska's 10 commitments, is expected to play offensive tackle, but depth concerns at the position dictate that at least two or three more tackles are likely to be included in the Huskers' 2004 recruiting class. ■

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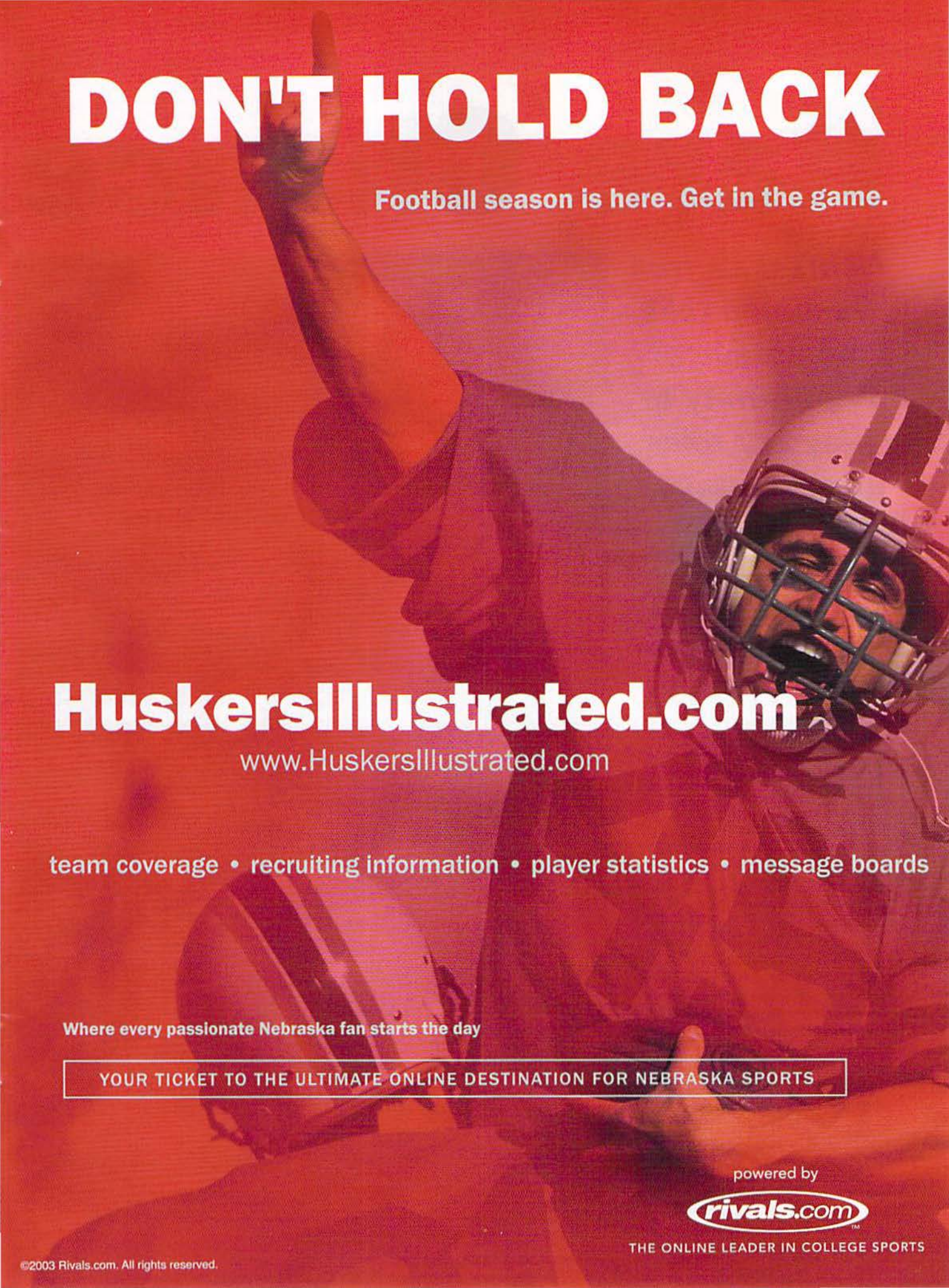
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Rare Chance

Nebraska's true freshmen take advantage of opportunity to play key roles

By Todd Henrichs

Dani Busboom sends a set back to Christina Houghtelling, who running a slide play drills the volleyball to the court, bringing the red-clad fans in the Coliseum to their feet.

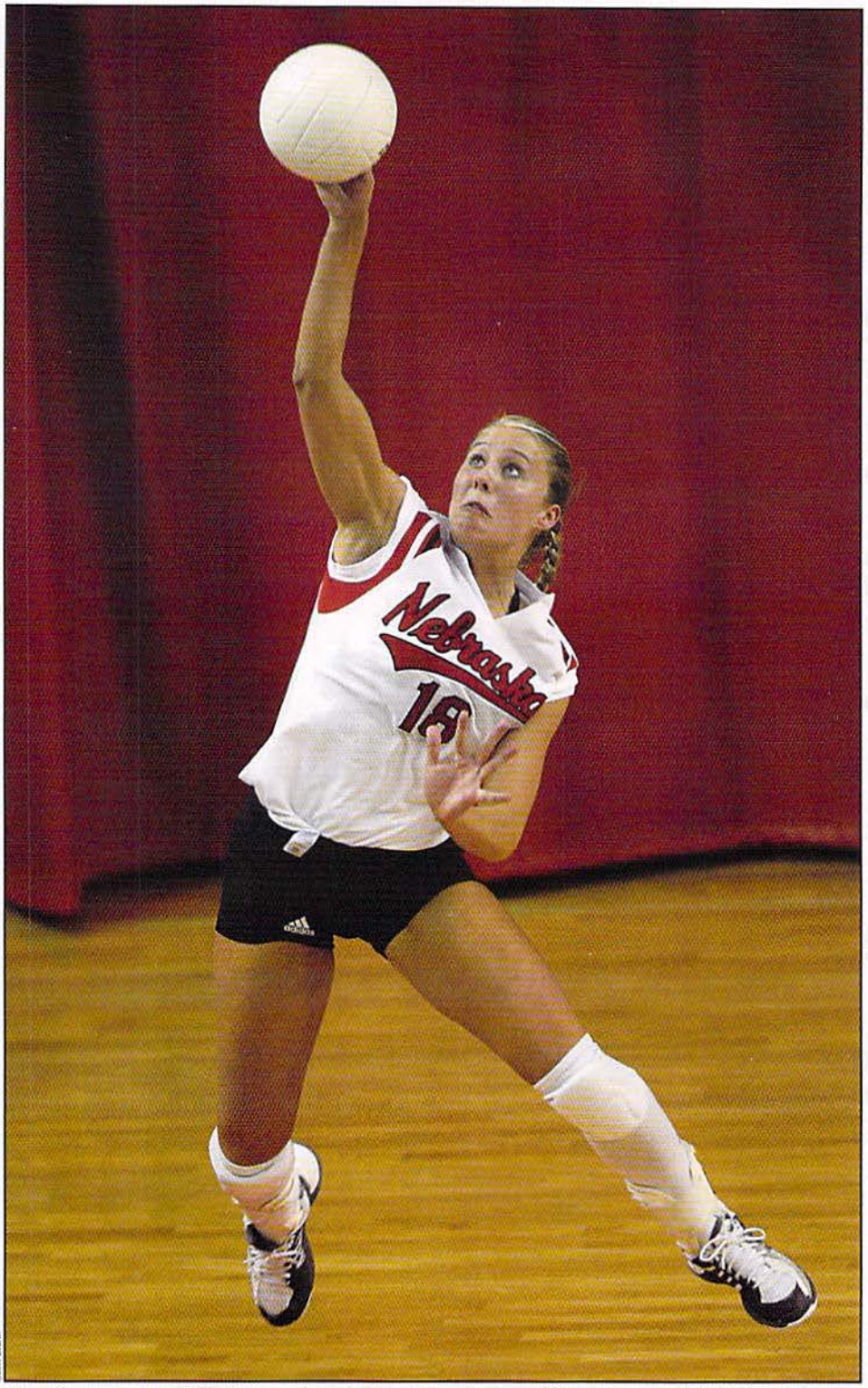
Nebraska's unparalleled tradition in volleyball in many ways has been built on the strong wills and stronger arms of homegrown student-athletes. But Busboom-to-Houghtelling might one day be judged as the ultimate Nebraska connection.

Busboom, the setter from tiny Freeman High School near Lincoln, and Houghtelling, the middle blocker from Cambridge in Nebraska's southwestern tip, share the rare opportunity of playing key roles as true freshmen this season.

It certainly didn't have to happen this way. If Nebraska head coach John Cook wanted, he could have implemented a one-setter system centered on sophomore Michelle Lynch, and Houghtelling could have waited her turn on the bench behind senior Sara Westling.

But following the philosophy of longtime Texas football coach Darrell Royal, Cook has shown a determination to let his talented, albeit young, players play.

"He used to say if a dog's gonna bite, it's gonna bite as a pup," Cook said. "I don't care if they're freshmen or seniors, they need to help us win,



Scott Bruhn

True freshman Dani Busboom shares the setting duties with sophomore Michelle Lynch and is among the team leaders in service aces.

and that's something that we've been telling them for the last six months. We're certainly not going to treat them any different."

That's not to say everything has been smooth as silk for Nebraska this season. The Huskers were beaten at home by Georgia Tech, something that hadn't happened in the regular season since 1999, and other nights have won without the prettiest of performances.

Some of the blame goes to the two-setter system, as much a work in progress for the Huskers this season as is Busboom's own career as a setter.

Athletically gifted in the sports of volleyball, basketball and softball, Busboom only converted to setter after saying she'd become a Husker. She set part-time for Freeman High School's volleyball team and ultimately for the Nebraska Juniors club program, but the learning curve remains steep.

As she's always done, Busboom says she draws strength from the encouragement of her father, Gene.

"Ever since I was in high school, after every single game — it didn't matter if I played awesome or bad — my dad always told me there's room for improvement," she said. "That's what I take with me. I know that I have to improve if I want to stay on the court."

Cook equated Busboom playing as a setter this season to a college football team competing for a national championship with a freshman quarterback in the fray.

"It's a tough position to play, but nothing fazes her," he said. "The important thing is that she continues to learn each match where she made mistakes and what she needs to work on.

"It's a game of such fine little things that happen at the setter position. She can make a hitter get the kill or she can make a hitter look really bad."

By the time their careers at Nebraska end, Busboom and Houghtelling figure to have the timing down pat. Houghtelling took over from Westling midway through the loss to Georgia Tech and has been there next to Busboom ever since.

The two players first hooked up as club teammates this summer, making each assist and kill as college teammates especially sweet.

"We experienced that in club a little bit, but to experience it in front of the home crowd is even better," Busboom said.

Busboom credited club coach Gwen Egbert for helping to develop this year's freshman class. Omaha Gross product Dani Mancuso, another true freshman, started against Georgia Tech because of an injury to Kelsey Fautsch and played critical points in other matches this year.

True freshman libero Amanda McCormick of Muncie, Ind., has also played this season despite being bothered by an elbow injury.

Busboom said she and the other freshmen have gained confidence from their teammates. The older players have told them to speak up, even if that means Busboom telling an experienced hitter to jump earlier on an attack.

Their fundamentals have improved with the daily repetition of practice. But there's no substitute for match experience.

"They're great students, they're great kids, and the thing everybody is seeing is they're great competitors," Cook said. "They have a chance to be a great freshmen class." ■

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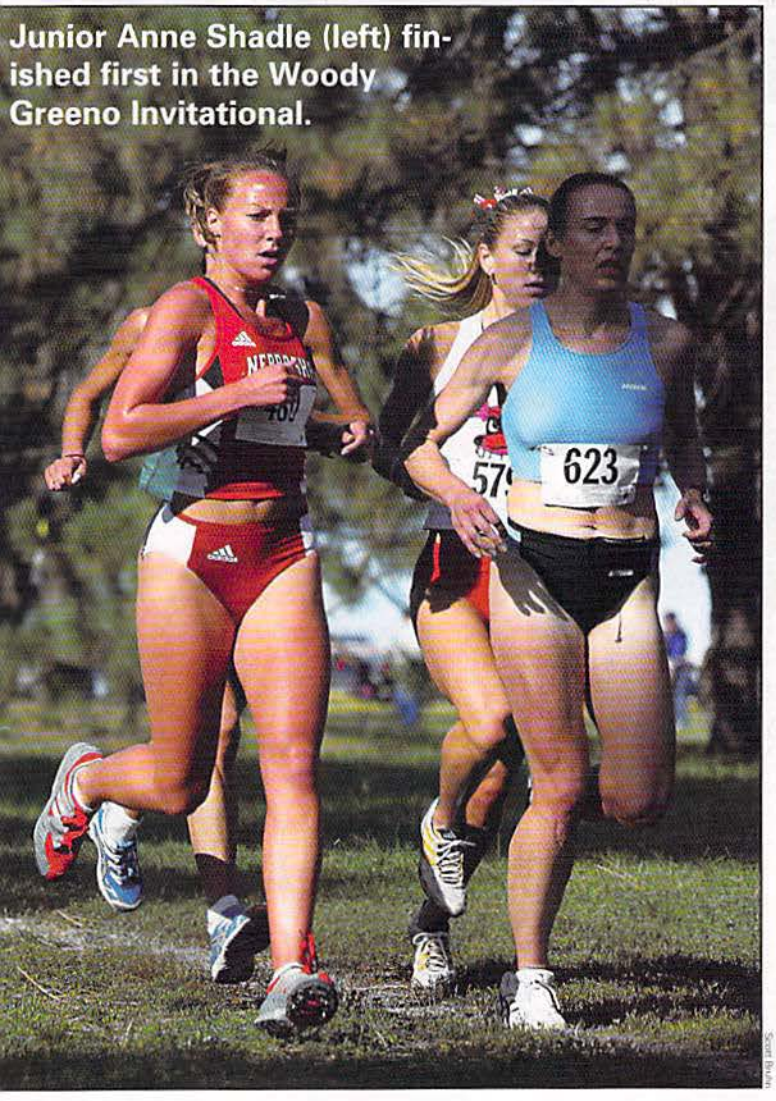
ALL SPORTS

Senior Dana Carne was the top Nebraska men's finisher in the first three meets of the cross country season.



Junior Anne Shadle (left) finished first in the Woody Greeno Invitational.

Freshman Ashley Tenn (24) and sophomore Vern Fitzgerald battle an opponent.

CROSSWORD

ACROSS

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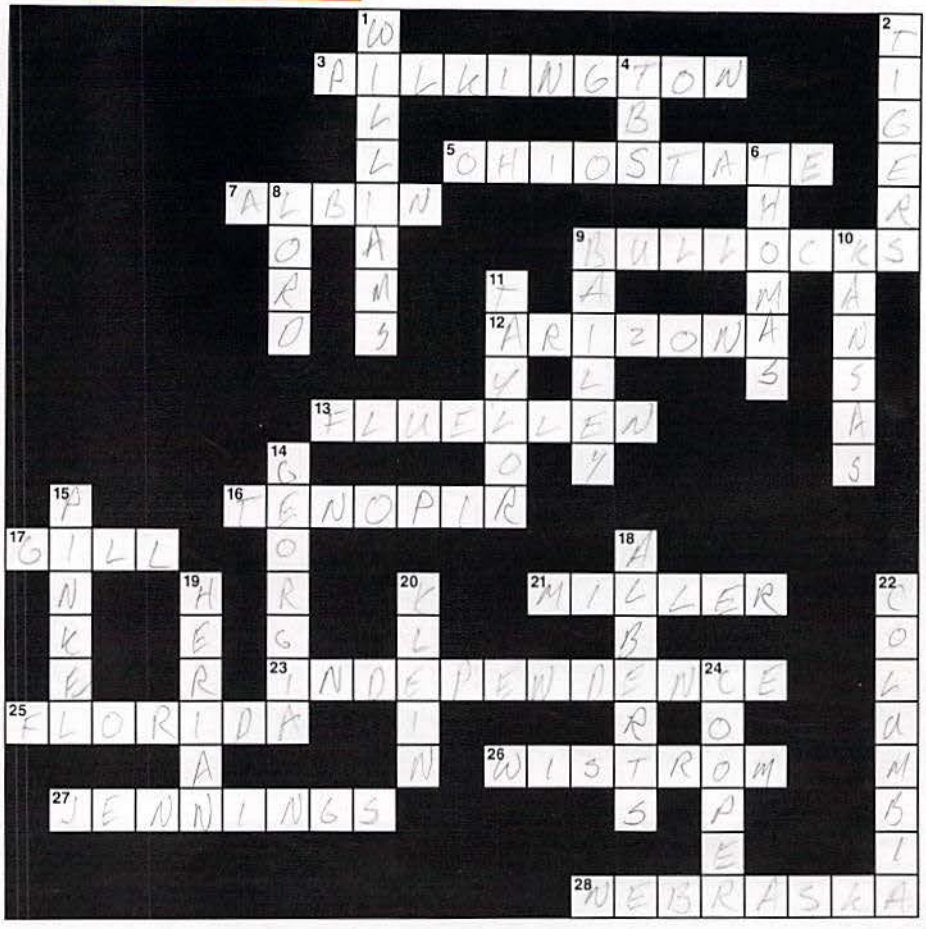
Answers in Oct. 18 issue



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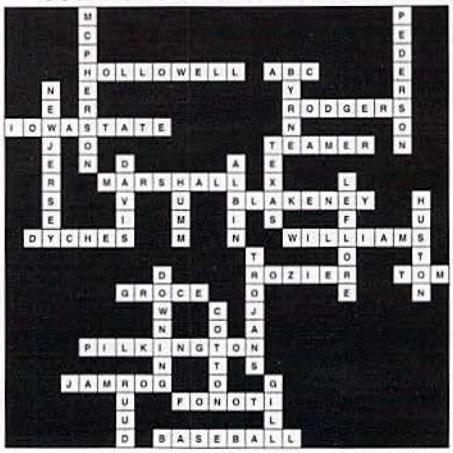

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Complicated Comparison

The expectations are, everything has to be working at optimum efficiency in every game

Mike BABCOCK

FRANK SOLICH TOOK OFFENSE at the question, or the way the question was worded anyway. How long could his team "just ride the coat tails of the defense and rely on them to win games?"

"Well," he began, pausing to consider a response.

Often when Solich begins with "well," he's unhappy, if not irritated.

In this case, he seemed irritated. "I don't appreciate how you're viewing it," he said, conceding that success depends not only on having a "great defense" but also on making big plays on offense.

"We're working toward that," he said. "We've made big plays these last two ball games. Have we missed on some? It's obvious. Did we control the line of scrimmage the way we wanted to in the first half? Absolutely not. Did their offense control the game? Absolutely not.

"Has any offense up to this point, that we've played, controlled the game? Absolutely not."

So why did he find himself having to defend his offense after a 30-0 victory against Troy State?

The answer is simple, really. Though coaches encourage players to take one game at a time, human nature, or more accurately fan nature, is to look ahead, to never be satisfied with the present.

Coach Frank Solich says the NU offense is making progress.

Sure, Nebraska has won five in a row and moved up in the national rankings, after being noticeably absent from the pre-season polls for the first time since the 1969 season.

But what's going to happen when it travels to Missouri, or to Texas, or when Kansas State comes to town? What's going to happen if the defense has some breakdowns? Stuff like that.

The expectations are, everything has to be working at optimum efficiency in every game: defense, offense and special teams. When those expectations aren't met, questions arise.

The question in question was more of a statement, however, casting aspersions on Nebraska's offense and ignoring the inextricable relationship between the various aspects of a team. Plus, answering the question as it was posed would have been to acknowledge its premise.

Five victories into the season, the Cornhusker defense has a championship look. But to compare its development to the development of the offense is comparing apples and oranges. Offensive coordinator Barney Cotton's task is different from defensive coordinator Bo Pelini's.

Though the numbers haven't been eye-catching, "I think Barney and the offensive staff are really doing a good job of trying to build in a lot of people to make big plays," said Solich.

"I've been pleased with the progress there."

The comparisons are complicated by the fact that the defense has had a dramatic turnaround, after significant struggles last season and the embarrassment at Colorado two seasons ago.

Pelini and the defensive staff have worked magic, it seems. And with the instant celebrity traceable to ESPN and the Internet, Nebraska's defense is drawing attention like never before.

The Cornhuskers have led the nation in total defense at season's end twice, in 1967 and 1984. But the Blackshirts have never been as celebrated as they are now.

They've been maligned, of course, and not just last season or after the debacle in Boulder in 2001. Nebraska's inability to win a national championship in 1983, with the Scoring Explosion offense, was laid on the shoulders of a young and developing defense — which led the nation the next season.

But the 1983 team wouldn't have been in position to play for the national title if not for the defense, which kept the Cornhuskers undefeated at both Oklahoma State and Oklahoma.

"We have a lot of confidence in our offense," Pelini said. "We know they're going to put points on the board. It's about playing as a team. When something bad happens to the offense, we have to respond. And they've responded when things have happened to us. We all work together."

Even though the offense has struggled, "there's no frustration (on defense)," said Pelini. "When we're out there, we have to do our job. When they're out there, they have to do their job."

The same is true of special teams, which struggled early against Troy State, Solich said.

"We still have a lot of work to do. It's obvious," he said.

And that applies to the defense, as well, according to Pelini.

"I think our defense has played great and will continue to play great," said Solich.

"But they're going to get tested. We're going to come across an awful lot of talented football teams as we get into the Big 12. So we'll be tested in a lot of ways."

The offense has passed its tests so far, maybe not with flying colors. But with some help from the defense, it put up 30 points against Troy State, which is all that really matters. ■

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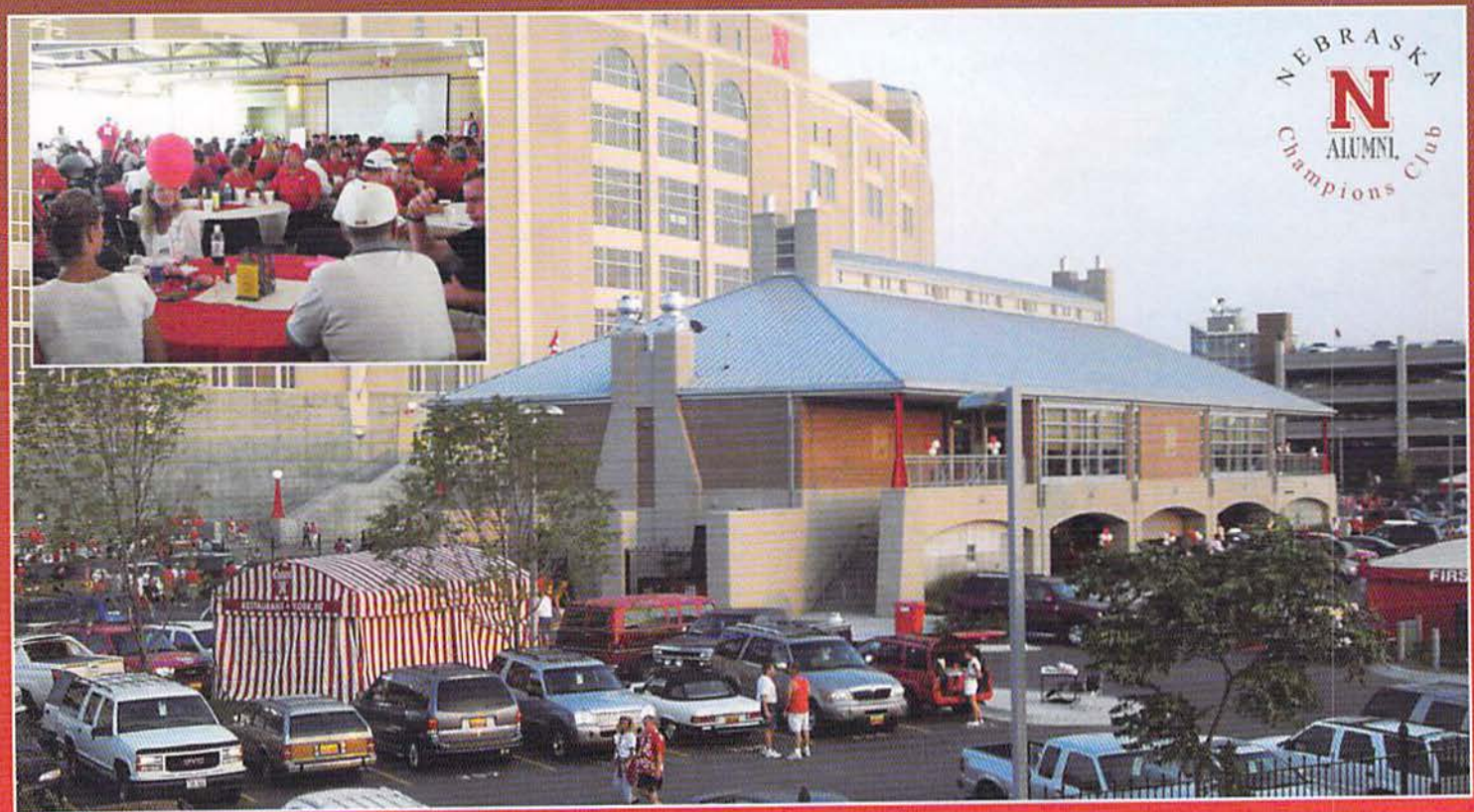

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